

Armida still
a fighter, even
for small things

Homework, exams
stress Chinese pupils

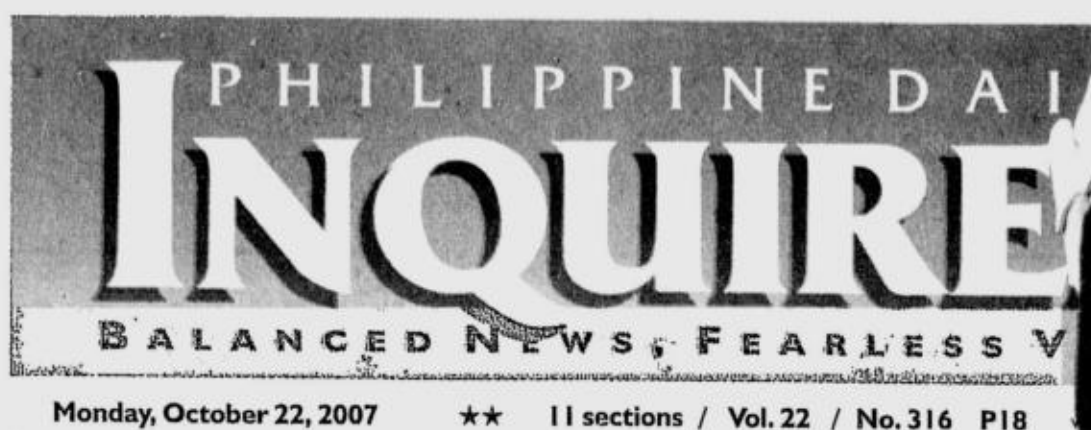


BEIJING—CHINA IS to reform school curriculum to ease the burden put on children by pushy teachers and parents eager to see them succeed in an

HOMEWORK/A8

Vietnam offers
windows of opportunity
for RP companies

Ronnie Alcano settles
for 2nd place in
US Open pool tilt



Monday, October 22, 2007

★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 316 P18



RESCUERS bring an unconscious woman to safety after a fire broke out at a restaurant in Glorietta mall in Makati. (Story in Metro, Page A25.)

Acts of heroism rise from the rubble

By DJ Yap

ON A DAY OF TRAGEDY AND GRIEF, there was hope—and heroism.

Oct. 19 will be remembered for its terror and uncertainty, but for those who lived through it, the kindness of strangers shone through the rubble, the clouds of dusty air, the streams of walking wounded and the pile of corpses.

A security guard, covered with blood and ash, cradled a bleeding

woman and helped her to an ambulance. Without a word, he rushed back to the site to attend to the others.

A woman tapped the shoulder of a rescue worker and said: "I'm a doctor. How can I help?"

Hearing this, a young woman came forward and identified herself as a nurse. In a moment, she was putting on gloves and administering first aid to the injured.

For Anthony Melendres, who

headed the first rescue squad to respond to Friday's blast at the Glorietta 2 mall in Makati City, these little acts of heroism made all the difference.

His 10-member team—eight men and two women—had just arrived at the scene and was starting to get "overwhelmed" by the sheer number of those who needed help.

"We were outnumbered," Melendres told the INQUIRER. "There were so many of them and just the 10 of us. We

couldn't work out a system immediately."

"Our rescuers were running in all directions. It was chaos."

Everywhere, people were screaming and crying for help. Most were in shock. Some were walking in circles, dazed. Others were covered with ash and dust.

Barely had they gotten off the

ACTS OF/A19

Accident angle probed

Cops find
no trace yet
of bomb
ingredient

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE YESTERDAY entered the basement of Glorietta 2 after siphoning off water and fumes in a bid to determine if the explosion that ripped through the Makati City shopping mall and left 11 people dead was a result of a terrorist attack or an accident.

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Director Geary Barias told the INQUIRER that the police checked the underground area for structural defects before sending probes inside. He said he expected the investigation there to be completed before midnight last night.

"We are hoping that in the post-blast investigation, we would get new evidence that would help us in the investigation," Barias said.

He said investigators had confirmed the seat of the explosion on Friday was located in the basement of the mall and not on the first floor.

ACCIDENT/A17



A HIGH school graduation photo of Jee Ann de Gracia, one of the fatalities in the Glorietta 2 explosion on Friday, is placed on her coffin at Rizal Funeral Homes in Pasay City.

Her life was not even starting yet, says pa

By DJ Yap, Julie M. Aurelio and Nancy Carvajal

FOR A FEW PRECIOUS MINUTES, Julian Marcos stood at the wreckage of the Glorietta 2 mall, in front of a single yellow candle, thinking of his daughter and of what might have been.

He thought of how his 17-year-old Janine had not yet experienced going out with a boyfriend,

or donned a real nurse cap, or gone to the United States to live the life she had dreamed of.

Then he thought of the things she could never do now, like preparing her mother's chocolate drink in the morning, horsing around with her younger sister, and getting another stuffed bear to add to her collection.

"Her life was not even starting yet," Marcos insisted. "I can

never accept that she's gone."

Janine was among the 11 people killed in Friday's explosion that rocked the country's financial center.

The 10th body—that of 23-year-old computer programmer Maureen de Leon—was found buried in the basement of the mall late Saturday. Hours later, the death toll rose to 11 when the injured Ricardo Petras, 24, died

in a hospital from multiple blast wounds, hospital officials said.

Yesterday, Marcos, along with his wife Soledad and two of their five children, went to the site where their daughter lost her life.

"I wanted to be at peace," he told the INQUIRER at the wake in the family residence in Taguig City.

Yesterday morning, before he decided to go to the Glorietta

HER LIFE/A17

Bombing
takes heat
off cash
gift scandal

By Amando Doronila

THE BOMBING AT THE GLORIETTA shopping mall on Friday, killing at least 11 people, has launched the country into the vicious cycle of the carousel called blame game. Whodunit?

The same question has remained unanswered

ANALYSIS

over who are responsible for the extrajudicial executions of up to 800 political activists and three scores of journalists since 2001 and, recently, for the distribution of more than P120 million in cash to 290 congressmen and 40 governors in Malacañang.

The Arroyo administration has offered a P2-million reward "for anybody who can give us information on the suspects in this incident." If President Macapagal-Arroyo is clueless, the national police is as confounded. All the police can say is that the bombing is the handiwork of generic "terrorists."

No group has claimed responsibility, except the So-laiman Revolutionary Movement, a group that security authorities have linked to the Abu Sayyaf. Police have rejected the claim as a "hoax."

The Melo Commission's inquiry into the extrajudicial killings has come up with a report that blamed the murders on

BOMBING/A12

BARANGAY POLLS

Vote-buy raps fly,
gimmicks abound

By Inquirer Bureaus

WHILE THE ENTHUSIASM generated by the national elections in May has died down, candidates for the Oct. 29 barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections have been trying to perk up the electorate by using time-tested campaign gimmicks.

Some candidates have resorted to merry-making—complete with Ati-Atihan dancers and motorcades of jeepneys, pedicabs and tricycles—to introduce themselves to voters.

Others opted to conduct an

antirabies vaccination campaign and free measles immunization for children.

Still others capitalized on a popular television show for name recall while some youth candidates named their group after a Japanese cartoon character to attract young voters.

The same charges of vote-buying and fraud that hounded candidates in the May 14 national elections have also cropped up in some provinces.

In Nueva Vizcaya, local officials and residents have expressed concern that the exer-

VOTE-BUY/A18



JANE Walker hugs a young scavenger in Manila's Smokey Mountain.

Briton leaves career to save RP children

JANE WALKER PICKS HER WAY barefoot through stinking black mud at Manila's Smokey Mountain dump, an apparition among the myriad garbage collectors she wants to rescue from their wretched poverty.

"Why are you not in our school today?" she asks a malnourished child with a gaunt frame and bloodshot eyes.

"I told you I would be looking for my students, you should come even if you are late," she gently scolds the child, before giving him a tight embrace.

"I want you to come back to school, and join us tomorrow," she says as she releases him to resume picking through a fresh

hill of rubbish for items to salvage in exchange for a few pesos.

A former executive with a British publishing house, the 43-year-old has been a fixture at Smokey Mountain for more than a decade, searching for children to feed and send to school in what was initially a quest for personal salvation.

Walker, from Britain, first arrived in Manila as a tourist in 1996, expecting a Southeast Asian tropical paradise.

Instead, she stumbled into an overpopulated and chaotic city, where children were

BRITON/A8

'Read along'
in mall draws
biggest crowd

By Eliza Victoria
Inquirer Research

FOR 11 SATURDAYS, THE INQUIRER has invited celebrities and role models to read stories to children of all ages in a quiet nook in its Makati office.

But last Saturday was different. The INQUIRER Read-Along program, which began in May, left the office confines to bring the joy of storytelling closer to its audience.

First stop was the Ramon Magsaysay Learning Center in Ermita, Manila, with returning Alitaptap storyteller Rich Rodriguez as guest reader.

READ ALONG/A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Mostly Cloudy
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Mostly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Mostly Cloudy
Laag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

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Second FRONT PAGE

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EZ2

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(In exact order)

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening

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SUPERLOTTO 6/49

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Opposition solons to back JDV vs GMA

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN THE EVENT OF A full-blown confrontation with President Macapagal-Arroyo, Speaker Jose de Venecia might find the most unlikely of allies: opposition congressmen.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez yesterday said he was "more sympathetic" to the embattled Speaker than to the President in the controversy over the seem-



SPEAKER Jose de Venecia

ingly lame impeachment complaint filed against Ms Arroyo by lawyer Roel Pulido.

Rodriguez said several other members of the minority bloc in the House of Representatives



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo

shared his sentiment.

"That's because De Venecia is doing the right thing so far," he told the INQUIRER yesterday, citing the Speaker's decision to inhibit himself from the decision

to refer the Pulido complaint to the committee on justice.

De Venecia had earlier said he would not transmit the complaint to the justice committee, considering that he—not Ms Arroyo—was purportedly the target of Pulido's three-page accusations.

"It's really an 'impeach me' case," Rodriguez said, noting that the referral of the weak complaint to the justice committee would only shield the President from a stronger complaint.

Under the rules, the House can only entertain one impeachment complaint in a year.

The minority hopes to block Ms Arroyo's year long immunity from

other suits by questioning the referral before the Supreme Court.

Rodriguez, a former dean of the San Sebastian College of Law, questioned the referral, saying it should not have been done by Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar.

The group's reaction to the referral will be decided in a minority caucus later this week, according to Rodriguez.

In the meantime, he said the minority bloc was studying the feasibility of supporting the impeachment complaint being readied by the United Opposition (UNO).

Opposition congressmen had been lukewarm to another im-

peachment complaint against Ms Arroyo following two unsuccessful attempts in 2005 and 2006.

Rodriguez had admitted that at present, there was still no new and big issue that could be used as the foundation of a new impeachment case.

But if the UNO comes up with a second impeachment complaint, he said the opposition would likely seek the support of De Venecia to gather 80 signatures needed to automatically transmit it to the Senate.

"We would need his support because this is a numbers game," the lawmaker said.

Palace: Lakas members loyal to President COA finds P203-M defective equipment in 15 hospitals

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF LEGAL counsel Sergio Apostol, a regional officer of the ruling Lakas-NUCD party, said yesterday President Macapagal-Arroyo would easily beat House Speaker Jose de Venecia if a loyalty check of all their members were held today.

"The bulk of Lakas members are still loyal to the President and will choose her over De Venecia if members are given a choice. This is the reason why De Venecia needs her

more than she needs him," said Apostol in a phone interview.

Apostol said it was inevitable for the Lakas-NUCD members to make a choice between the President and De Venecia especially if their strained relations do not improve soon.

Apostol said that proof of the President's broader support in Lakas NUCD was the healthy attendance in two meetings called by the President in Malacañang—the first held after the Senate testimony of De Venecia's son, Joey, on the ZTE-

national broadband network probe; and the second, the controversial meeting where bags of cash were distributed to lawmakers.

Apostol said that fortunately, the President and De Venecia were forced to declare a temporary ceasefire as both leaders have to address the more urgent matter of dealing with the Glorietta Mall blast.

"He (De Venecia) was invited to attend the National Security Council meeting on Tuesday, and that means they have a truce," said Apostol.

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHILE FILIPINOS COMPLAIN OF A SEVERE lack of health care facilities, some P203 million worth of defective hospital equipment, as well as unused and expired medicines, are gathering dust in at least 15 government hospitals, according to the Commission on Audit.

In its 2006 report on the Department of Health, government auditors blamed poor procurement planning and equipment maintenance for this sorry situation.

COA found P196 million worth of x-rays, ventilators, CT scans and other vital diagnostic machines and emergency equipment are just lying unused and "out-of-order." Auditors noted that some of the machines had never been used since they were acquired.

Expensive repair

Among the reasons given by hospitals in the COA report were: Expensive repair costs, unavailability of spare parts in the market, skilled operators and technicians and inadequate space and power supply.

"These only prove that procurement was not properly planned and there was no preventive maintenance program that would have ensured that the equipment were regularly checked and maintained in good working condition," the COA said.

Based on the report, the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital has the most number of "out-of-order" hospital equipment costing over P40 million.

The report also noted that a CT scan worth P29.8 million, a life-saving device for stroke victims, among others, has not yet been installed at the Batangas Regional Hospital since its delivery on Oct. 29, 2006.

The Cagayan Valley Medical Center has some P25.5 million worth of equipment lying idle in its storerooms due to the "lack of acces-

sories and untimely repairs." The Amang Rodriguez Hospital has roughly P28 million worth of deficient and unused machines with 44 percent of them labeled as "defective."

Expired medicines

The government's premier Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, located close to the Department of Health, also has about P12.4 million worth of idle or unutilized equipment and P9.22 million defective machines. About P2.6 million worth of equipment there were deemed "not fully utilized."

COA also reported that some P7 million worth of medicines and laboratory supplies had either expired or remained unused in four hospitals in the country "wasting scarce government resources."

An inventory at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center disclosed that P1.4 million worth of medicines have expired because of its failure to adopt the "first-in, first-out" policy.

The Central Health Development office for Western Visayas accounted for P4.7 million of unutilized medical items, while the Quirino Memorial Medical Center in Metro Manila has P805,000 worth of "slow-moving" medicines.

Other hospitals with unused equipment or expired medicines were the Dr. Jose Rodriguez Memorial Hospital and Tondo Medical Center in Metro Manila; Luis Hora Memorial Regional Hospital in the Cordillera; Bataan General Hospital in Central Luzon; Gov. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital and Talisay District Hospital in Central Visayas; the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu; Northern Mindanao Medical Center and Mayor Hilario Ramiro Regional and Teaching Hospital in Mindanao and the Central Health Development office in Davao.

WHAT'S INSIDE

QUERUBIN
rushed
to hospital

/A3

LAWYER
wants Ong out
of Sandiganbayan

/A5

PINOYS
nabbed in Bahrain
for shabu use

/A21

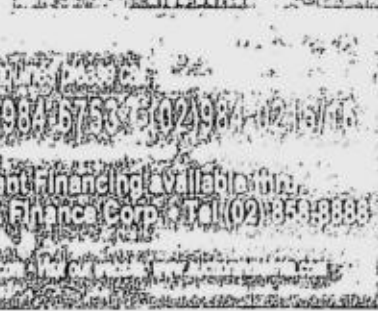
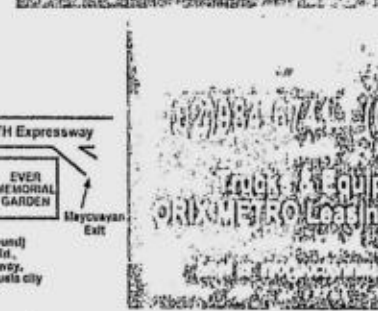
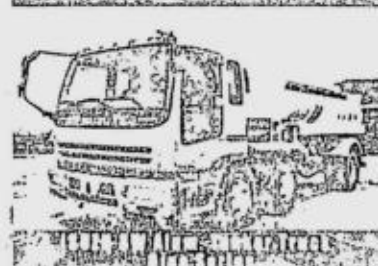
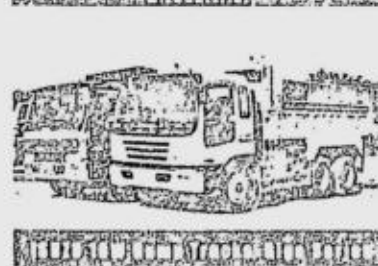
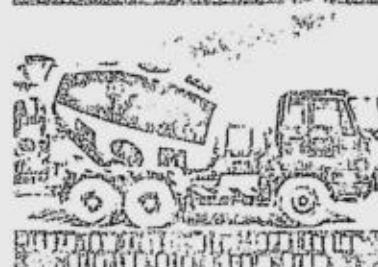
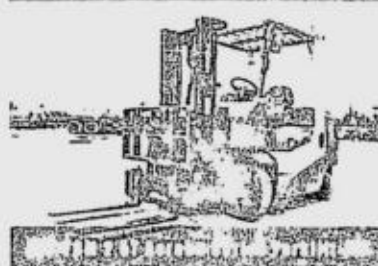
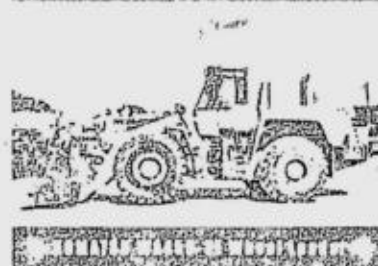
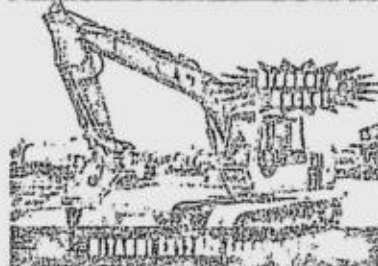
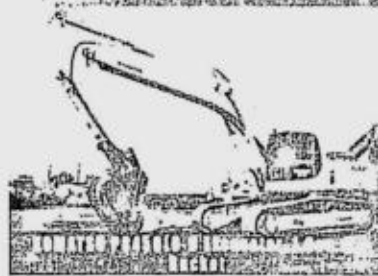
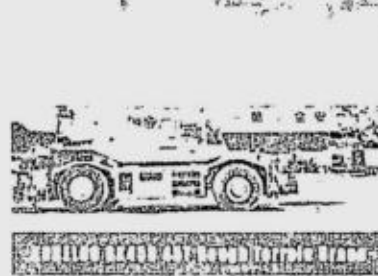
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Querubin rushed to hospital

By Nikko Dizon

DETAINED MARINE COL. ARIEL Querubin was brought yesterday to the V Luna Medical Center in Quezon City from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, due to fever and chills caused by an infection. Querubin will remain con-

fined at the military hospital where he will undergo a complete medical checkup, his lawyer, Rodrigo Artuz, said in a phone interview.

In a text message, Querubin's wife, Maria Flor, said that the colonel's condition was not related to his bout with malaria early this

year. He contracted the disease during his tour of duty in Mindanao.

"But he has (an) infection. (The) doctors are trying to check what caused his infection. They said he is okay," Mrs. Querubin said.

Querubin, a Medal of Valor

awardee, is among the 28 Marine and Army Scout Ranger officers who were charged by the military leadership with mutiny and violations of the Articles of War for allegedly planning to withdraw support from the Arroyo administration in February last year.

Earlier this month, after initially

insisting that he does not need hospitalization, the AFP finally allowed Querubin's co-accused, former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, the highest ranked among the officers, to be confined and undergo medical checkup at V Luna after suffering from dizziness and hypertension.

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Lawyer wants Ong out of Sandiganbayan

By Leila B. Salaverria

BLOCKED FROM JOINING THE Supreme Court because of questions on his being a natural-born Filipino, Sandiganbayan Justice Gregory Ong is now facing a legal challenge to his position at the antigrift court.

Lawyer Ferdinand Topacio has asked the

high court to disqualify Ong from the Sandiganbayan, and to declare that the Office of the Solicitor General erred in refusing his earlier request to file such a petition.

In his petition filed last week, Topacio said Ong's birth certificate states that he is a "Chinese" citizen, while his petition for admission to the 1979 bar examination shows that he is a "naturalized" Filipino citizen.

Topacio said these documents show that Ong was not born a Filipino citizen—a constitutional requirement for those serving in the Supreme Court and other collegiate courts—and is therefore not qualified to sit in the Sandiganbayan.

President Arroyo had chosen Ong to fill in a vacancy in the Supreme Court earlier this year. The high court, however, blocked it because of the questions on his citizenship.

Ong maintained that he was a natural-born Filipino because his father became a Filipino citizen before he reached the age of 18, and his mother was born to a Filipino father. He has petitioned the court to correct what he said was an erroneous entry in his birth certificate.



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Teodoro urges PMA cadets to respect human rights

FORT DEL PILAR—DEFENSE chief Gilberto Teodoro Jr. urged the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Cadet Corps to uphold and respect human rights once they step out in the field

and begin their duties as military officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Teodoro, a lawyer by profession, also pointed out that new legal norms and rules have restricted the

way the AFP addresses the "tactics" of the enemies of the state.

"Today, we are at the challenge whereby we increase our risks because of the increasingly asymmetrical tactics and forms of warfare employed by the enemies of the state," Teodoro said in his keynote speech at the PMA's 109th foundation day.

"The armed forces and the police, for that matter, are constrained by stricter legal norms,

legal rules and regulations which constrain the methods and the manner by which we conduct our operations," he said.

Waxing poetic, Teodoro told the cadet corps that "the academy is not merely an institution of education or an institution for building up a professional career but a place where values, where morals, and where skills are ingrained through a unique training concept not merely into the

minds, not merely the hearts, but the souls of each and everyone who passes through its portals."

"Thus you have the three words—courage, integrity, and loyalty—drilled into you when you start and continue to flow through your veins with your blood as you come out," Teodoro said.

The military has been accused of human rights violations, particularly extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, under

the Arroyo administration.

But the AFP has consistently denied having a hand in the cases, which have prompted a United Nations special rapporteur to conduct an investigation in the country early this year.

"I must stress once again together with the whole armed forces the need to respect and to understand the concept of upholding human rights and human dignity," Teodoro said. *Nikko Dizon*

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Ombudsman taps Chinoys in graft fight

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE OFFICE OF the Ombudsman has tapped Filipino-Chinese businessmen in its fight for a graft-free and business-friendly environment in the country.

Under a memorandum of agreement, the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCI), is expected to assist the anti-graft body in conducting lifestyle checks on government officials.

The FFCCCI will also give recommendations on how to improve systems and procedures carried out by government agencies in dealing with businessmen.

The MOA aims to curb corruption in the country's business sector, according to Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

She expressed hope that the move would help eradicate red tape and reduce, if not totally wipe out, opportunities for corruption in the busi-

ness sector, thus, improving the country's image as an "investment haven among local and foreign businessmen."

"It takes two to tango. There is no corruption in an agency without the aid of a private person," Gutierrez said in a statement.

"We will make it easy for businessmen to deal with these agencies so they can tell them to stick to the rules and not ask money to facilitate transactions or secure clearances or permits," she added.

CA orders tax trial resumed

THE COURT OF APPEALS has directed the Pasig Regional Trial Court to resume its hearing on the validity of the Rizal provincial government's tourism tax which fast-food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. and its franchisees had contested.

The appellate court directed the Pasig RTC to receive evidence about the validity of the Rizal Government's Provincial Ordinance 98-01 that levies a one-percent tourism tax on the gross income of all resorts as well as on the gross sales of hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, discos, beer houses and similar establishments.

The Pasig RTC earlier declared the said ordinance null and void, ruling in favor of Jollibee and its franchisees Lyns Foods Services Inc. and Jabelle Food Services Inc.

The corporations had protested the tax assessments on them which totaled over P2 million combined, and had sought to stop the enforcement of the ordinance for the collection of tourism taxes.

Jollibee Foods was assessed P1.366 million for the years 2000 to 2002. Lyns Food Services was assessed P375,018 for 2002, while Jabelle Food Services was assessed P447,160 for 2002.

The province of Rizal contested the Pasig RTC's decision before the Court of Appeals.

In a Sept. 28 decision, the appellate court said the Pasig RTC should not have decided on the case upon Jollibee and the franchisees' motion that the case be submitted for judgment based on their pleading alone. **Leila B. Salaverria**



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Briton leaves career to save RP children

From page A1

left to beg on the streets and homeless families lived in cardboard boxes in cemeteries.

Symbol of poverty

Covering a sprawling bayside area near Tondo District, Smokey Mountain was an embarrassing symbol of the crushing poverty and social inequalities that still exist in the Philippines.

Smoke from accumulated methane gas regularly wafts from the site, covering parts of Manila in soot.

Much of the site has now been transformed into low-cost tenement housing for the poor. But clusters of families still squat on its fringes, and a large portion remains a permanent open dump for thousands of tons of daily refuse.

Three years after Walker's first visit, another dump in Quezon City's northern Payatas District—ironically called the "Promised Land"—triggered an avalanche that buried alive an estimated 200 garbage pickers.

"I was taking a taxi ride and we stumbled in this squatter area. I was shocked to find people living in such dire conditions and I knew I had to do something," Walker tells Agence France-Presse as she walks barefoot in the dump, having given her boots to an elderly man with sores on his feet.

Haunting images

"I saw the children, there was a void where a smile should have been, emptiness in their eyes," she said. "I had a garden shed back home which was a mansion compared to where these people were living in."

With the images she saw haunting her, Walker returned to Britain and set up the Philippine Christian Foundation.

Her transformation and zeal worried friends, and alienated some who chided her for throwing away a career she had worked hard to build.

Walker eventually quit her publishing job and took on three others to save more money.

Her personal life took a tumultuous turn after her partner left her following the birth of their son. As her savings dwindled, Walker packed her bags and relocated to Manila to be closer to what she called her "other children."

Time to give back

"I had enough of the fast cars, the night life. I had it all. I had taken so much in life that it was time to give back," Walker says, adding that she had always felt an "emptiness" despite her success.

Her foundation converted an old government warehouse near Smokey Mountain into a school offering basic elementary education to children of garbage pickers, as well as vocational training for their parents.

Running the program has not been easy—the monsoon rains bring foul smelling floods, while volunteers try to protect the food from marauding rats.

Mercifully, volunteers are not in short supply and Walker's vision has spread to the point that the foundation now employs dozens of teachers and health workers. It has also been attracting a lot of attention from potential donors.

"She is an angel around here," says senior teacher Filemon Jubta, who left a government-run school to help out.

He said about 500 children are currently enrolled in the school. Books and supplies are free, but they have to make do with near spartan accommodation. **AFP**



JANE Walker treads on the Smokey Mountain dump to reach out to children working as scavengers. **AFP**

Homework, exams ...

From page A1

increasingly competitive society, a vice education minister said.

Chinese pupils were suffering from poor eyesight in increasing numbers and at a younger age, Vice Education Minister Yuan Guiren told reporters on the sidelines of the ruling Communist Party's 17th National Congress, which closed yesterday.

Tiring homework and mounting exam pressure were to blame, Yuan said.

"The primary reason is the traditional East Asian culture in which all parents want their kids to become dragons and phoenixes," Yuan said. "Too much emphasis is placed on diplomas and exam scores."

That was exacerbated by the fact China was a developing nation with 1.3 billion people and its one-child policy, Yuan said.

Slash homework

"The competition in employment is fierce and that pressure has been cascaded back to schools ... every parent expects

his child to outperform peers," the vice education minister said.

The education ministry would cut the difficulty of the textbooks, slash homework, make classes more interesting and limit the number of tests, Yuan said.

Another problem the government had to tackle was the education of 13 million rural children who swarmed into the cities with their parents working as migrant workers, Yuan said.

More than 100 million peasants across the country migrate to the booming cities every year for manual labor and small-time businesses.

But policy hurdles for them to settle in the cities abound, including those that prevent their children from receiving a good education.

An estimated 23 million "left-behind children" of migrant workers stay in the countryside.

The government has ordered urban public schools to open up to the 7.88 million "migrant children" of school age, Yuan said, adding private schools were also allowed to accommodate some of them. **Reuters**

Displaced workers to get help

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment (Dole) has set up quick reaction teams (QRTs) in its national and regional offices to provide help to displaced workers under an expanded assistance program.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said the QRTs would set up an early warning system with companies and community leaders to monitor worker displacement occurrences.

The teams would then immediately conduct profiling of the displaced workers to determine the type of assistance that would be provided to them, Brion said.

"Assistance shall include job search services, local and overseas employment facilitation, and provision of livelihood loans and skills training as well as training programs for specialized skills to displaced workers who opt to put up businesses or find new employment in key industries," the Dole secretary said in a statement.

Brion said that at the company or enterprise level, the QRTs have been tasked to assist distressed firms in the form of training and learning sessions focusing on developing an internal adjustment plan detailing alternatives to worker dismissals or lay-offs.

"In case displace-

ment is inevitable, the QRTs shall help affected firms and communities develop a displacement plan on strategies and options aimed at helping workers cope with impending displacement," Brion said, adding that the options include training, enterprise creation, early retirement and financial incentives.

Brion said the Dole adjustment measures program (AMP) would be implemented nationwide to assist threatened or displaced workers due to rightsizing, redundancy, import competition, introduction of technological change and labor-saving devices and other economic reasons directly or indirectly caused by trade liberalization; at risk com-

panies particularly those which desire to implement responsible workforce restructuring; and communities with large-scale displacement of the local workforce.

"The Dole-AMP is a safety net program

that provides a package of assistance and other forms of interventions as a means of helping workers and companies cope with economic and social disruptions," Brion explained.

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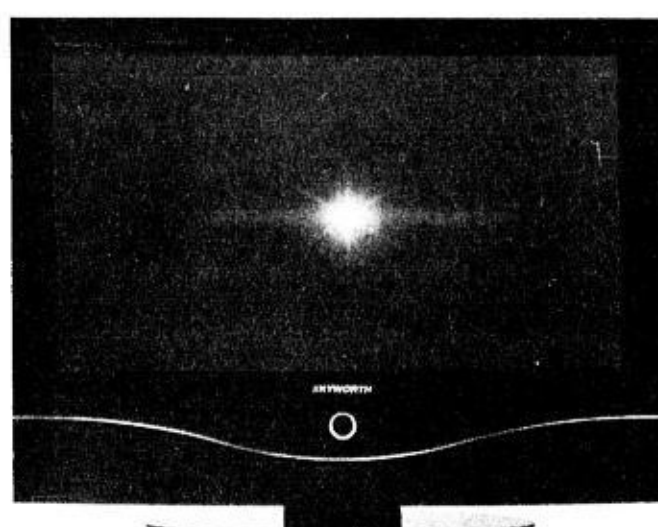
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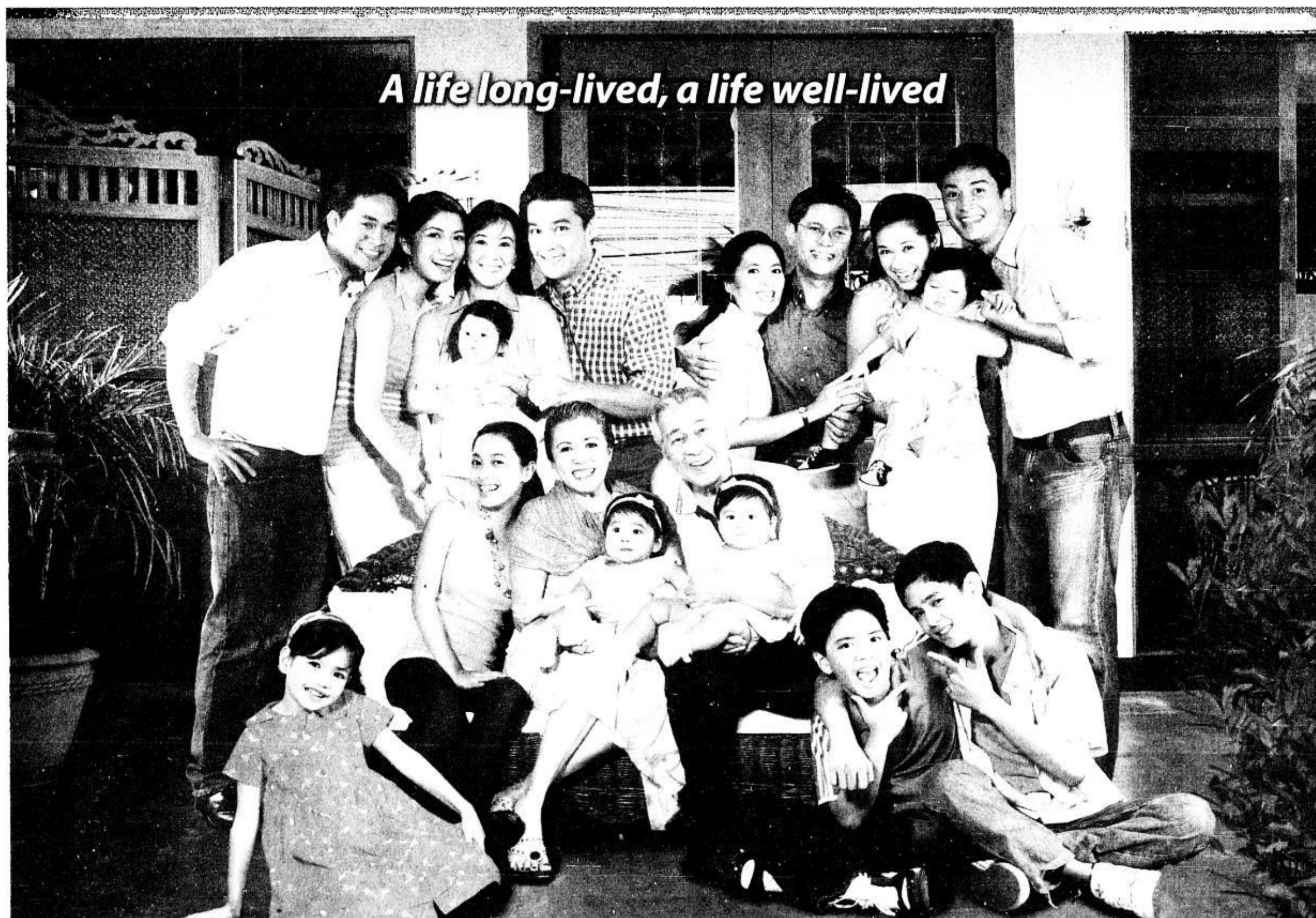
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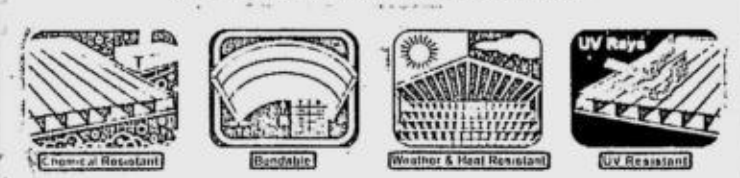
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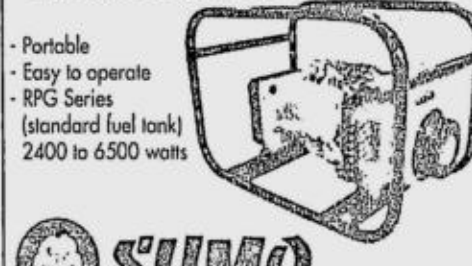
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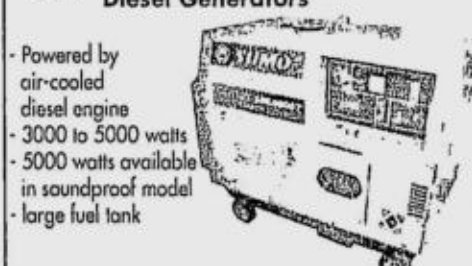
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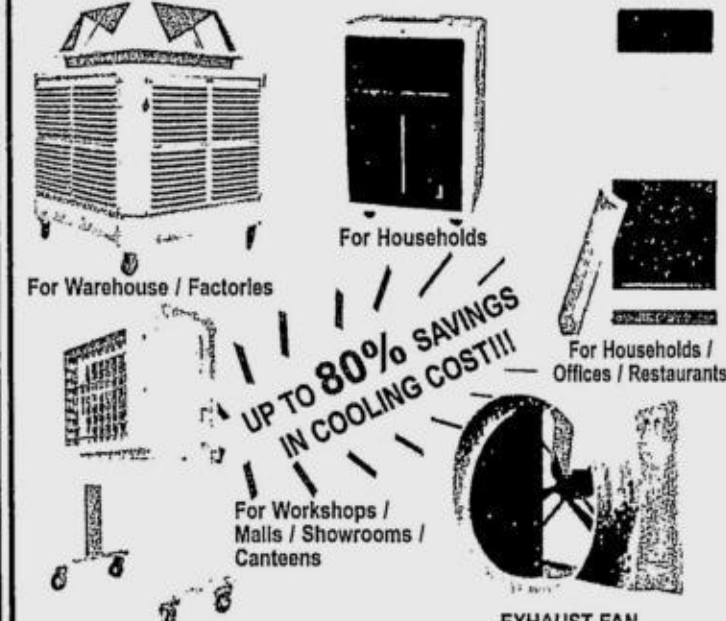
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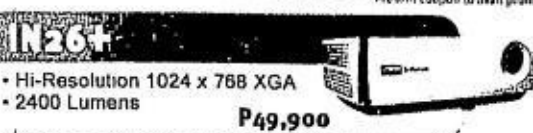
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Bombing takes heat off cash gift scandal

From page A1

the abstract concept of a "culture of impunity," a finding that didn't produce warm bodies for criminal prosecution, although right-wing officers in the security forces were implicated. The report has since hit a dead end. No one has been taken to court to account for the murders.

Initial investigations of the Makati bombing have uncovered what pass for hard evidence—traces of RDX, a highly explosive element of C4, which police bomb experts claim are ordnance components, suggesting that the explosives presumably originated from the military.

Ominous implications

This presumption was quickly contradicted by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, a former general, saying it was premature to say the C4-type bomb was used in the attack. Linking the army has ominous political implications, with the blast coming in the midst of reports of unrest in the barracks in the wake of the scandal over the cash gifts.

The suggestion of the laboratory tests on the blast fragments seems to be that rogue soldiers may have been behind a plot to sow violence and chaos as a condition for the military to intervene to maintain public order and safety or to show up the impotence of civilian authority to discharge its responsibility to protect human rights of citizens regardless of political beliefs.

This scenario is the chilling message sent by the bombing to the civilian government that had been jumping from one crisis to the next, involving alleged rigging of the 2004 election results, and corruption, the most recent of which was the use of funds at the disposal of Malacañang, whether taken from public or private coffers.

An alternative theory in the investigation into the Makati bombing is that it was accidentally set off by incendiary material inside the building.

Cash distribution scandal

Whatever the cause of the blast and who are responsible, the obvious immediate impact is that it has taken the heat off the President over the cash distribution scandal. The bomb exploded when the momentum of public outrage over the scandal was building up.

Since the scandal erupted more than a week ago, the President was paralyzed from presenting a credible explanation for the cash payoffs after an avalanche

of beneficiaries had admitted receiving the gifts without knowing the source of the fund and purpose of the munificence.

By the weekend, there were signs that the scandal was rapidly developing into a crisis worse than the 2005 Garcillano tapes bombshell that pushed the Arroyo administration to the brink of collapse.

The Catholic bishops' hierarchy condemned the payoffs. The Makati Business Club and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ms Arroyo's key allies in the business community, called on her to come clean on the payoffs. Rumors were rife of imminent Cabinet resignations, as well as talk of "mutiny" in the military camps.

Momentum of backlash

In fact, Ms Arroyo had planned to issue a public statement by the weekend. This was overtaken by events when the Makati bomb exploded, knocking off the cash distribution scandal from the newspaper headlines and halting the momentum of the backlash of the rising outrage over the hand-outs.

The bombing put the President back into the driver's seat to control the agenda casting her in the role of a guarantor of public order and safety. Disasters, whether manmade or from natural causes, invariably play into the hands of beleaguered political leadership.

French-style refocusing

The power of media exposure of crisis events to refocus the public agenda was highlighted on Thursday, a day before the Makati blast, when French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced his divorce from his glamorous and elegant wife, Cecilia.

The announcement was made in the midst of a strike of transport, gas and electricity unions in protest against Sarkozy's reform that reduced public sector pensions. The strike paralyzed Paris, cutting off electricity even to Sarkozy's private residence at Versailles.

The French media have been on a feeding frenzy for weeks on the speculations of the imminent split. The story had dominated the media for weeks, overshadowing the transport strike.

All about timing

The opposition Socialist Party suggested that Sarkozy timed the announcement to coincide with the strike, perhaps in an attempt to mute its news impact.

Even the left-wing Liberation could not ignore the story. It apologized to its readers that it felt compelled to report the news of the divorce although the paper "respects French tradition." This tradition, according to Canada's National Post, shielded former presidents like Jacques Chirac and Francois Mitterrand, who had the same lover at different times.

Radio France Internationale's Loic Hervouet explained the dynamic: "French journalists, unlike Anglo-Saxon journalists, believe that full disclosure is not desirable. Such information is considered pure fluff."

In Portugal on Friday for a meeting of the European Union, Sarkozy tartly told reporters, when questions were asked about his divorce during a press conference: "I was elected by the French to find solutions for their problems, not to comment on my private life."

The Makati bombing is a compelling read. It has shifted the headlines from the cash distribution scandal. However, it has not killed the clamor for a full explanation. The clamor has taken a life of its own.

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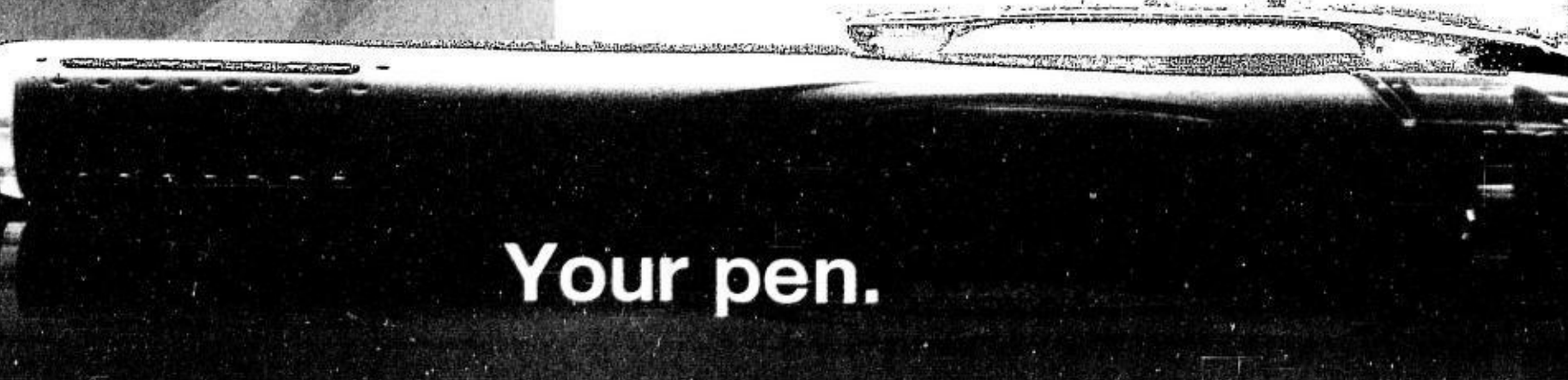
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RP's mangrove cover slowly recovering

By TJ Burgonio

THERE'S NEW EVIDENCE THAT THE country's mangrove cover has slowly grown to nearly 60 percent of its original state in the 1990s.

Satellite pictures from the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) indicated that the cover has reached 289,890 hectares, according to the Coastal and Marine Management Office (CMMO).

"We have 289,890 hectares, and we're trying to validate this figure on the ground whether this is true or not," CMMO executive director Florendo Barangan said in a recent briefing. The CMMO is under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

If confirmed, the increasing cover could be attributed to a host of non-governmental organizations who raised public awareness on the need to protect mangrove forests, Barangan said.

The country's mangrove cover was a robust 500,000 ha in the 1900s, but this dwindled to 112,000 ha in 1998 from over-exploitation, conversion of areas to other uses and logging of watersheds, according to studies.

Most mangroves were cut for their timber, or were converted into shrimp ponds or fish farms. Their disappearance became noticeable in the 1970s. This resulted in the deterioration of sea grass and coral reef ecosystems, studies said.

Only 4 percent of the 27,000 sq km of the country's coral reefs are in excellent condition, ac-

cording to Theresa Mundita Lim of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB).

Alarmed by their denudation, conservation groups sought protection of mangroves through the passage of new rules and regulations, including setting up watch stations in swamps.

Barangan also said that CMMO has included several cities and municipalities in its \$61-million Integrated Coastal Resource Management (ICRM), which seeks to protect coastal resources in the country.

The project provides community based approaches to the sustainable development and management of mangroves, sea grass bed, coral reefs and other coastal resources.

According to Perry Aliño, chair of the Marine Protected Areas Support Network (MSN), the country's rich marine resource

was under "serious threat" because of the dwindling mangrove cover, and the destruction of coral reefs and seabed grass.

MSN and the Coastal Zone Philippines are holding a summit on sustainable financing and marine protected areas on Oct. 27 and 28 in Iloilo City to draw up an action plan that will plug the gaps in MPA management such as weak governance and poor compliance of stakeholders.



THESE are a few of the last mangroves standing at the mouth of the Pampanga River.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL



Monday, October 22, 2007
29th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:
Gospel:

Someone in the crowd spoke to Jesus, "Master, tell my brother to share with me the family inheritance." He replied, "My friend, who has appointed me as your judge or your attorney?" Then Jesus said to the people, "Be on your guard and avoid every kind of greed, for even though you have many possessions, it is not that which gives you life."

And Jesus continued with this story, "There was a rich man and his land had produced a good harvest. He thought: 'What shall I do? For I am short of room to store my harvest.' So this is what he planned: 'I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones to store all this grain, which is my wealth. Then I may say to myself: My friend, you have a lot of good things put by for many years. Rest, eat, drink and enjoy yourself.' But God said to him: 'You fool! This very night your life will be taken from you; tell me who shall get all you have put aside?' This is the lot of the one who stores up riches instead of amassing for God."

Commentary

Are we faithful? Do we believe in Jesus risen from the dead and do we stake our life on that reality? Are we no longer far from God but have been drawn near to God in Jesus? Do our actions reveal our faith or do they contradict our words of being believers? Jesus is asked to intervene in a family dispute over inheritance. One asks Jesus to convince the other to give him what he thinks is his (this we do all the time—wanting God to move on our account, against others in our family, work, nation, church even). But Jesus won't be caught in such a useless endeavor that belies the larger issues. He tells the story of a man who is about to die and all he can think of is what he is going to do with all his money since he is doing so well. Are we fools, making plans without thought of God and what is demanded of us, here and now, let alone as a final accounting?

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Rom 4:20-25
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Steel ourselves

THE COMPOSITE PHOTO CARRIED ON YESTERDAY's front page reveals the horror at the heart of Glorietta mall. The three-story lobby of Glorietta 2 looks like a war zone: a surreal crater where the center of the ground floor should be, a ripped roof exposing the mad tangle of wires and store merchandise and twisted pipes to the elements.

Whoever set off the explosion last Friday had serious mayhem in mind; the attack was not meant to scare, but to kill, and to kill as many as possible.

The fact that the image was "digitally stitched," as the photo caption phrased it, is itself testimony to the unprecedented scale of the attack. The damage was so extensive photographers needed to weave different photos into one, simply to produce an image that can help the human eye make sense of the havoc.

We do not have official confirmation, as yet, that the attack was an act of terrorism, but what else could it be? Of the many malls in Metro Manila, Glorietta is not the newest or the tallest or the most popular or the most crowded; in fact, its main source of vulnerability is shared by a handful of other malls. It is based in Makati City, the country's central business district.

This is the same reason the coup plotters of 2003 seized the Oakwood tower (part, not coincidentally, of the entire Glorietta complex). An attack on it sends the message, to the entire world, that the country's financial capital is hostage to circumstance.

Thus, the sense of disorientation many Filipinos feel today comes not only from the magnitude of the tragedy or the number of victims it has claimed, but also from the symbolic nature of the target of opportunity: true innocents, in the center of Makati. If it can happen there, many of us think, it can happen anywhere.

At a time like this, we need to steel ourselves, not only against the possibility of similar attacks, but also against the temptation to panic. Emmanuel Pelaez's plaintive question after an assassination attempt almost killed him during the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship is back on many lips: "What is happening to our country, General?" The lack of certainty and, worse, the lack of public trust in some of the country's most important institutions can suck the less resolute among us down into a spiral of despair.

We must not allow that to happen. We need to remind ourselves that, terrible as the Glorietta tragedy undoubtedly was, many institutions in our society responded effectively in its aftermath.

By and large, the police authorities did the right thing, sending emergency units and cordoning off the scene. The Philippine National Red Cross set up an on-site emergency center immediately, helped treat the wounded, kept vigil while the search for more survivors—or more victims—continued. The management of Glorietta mall put in place an information-sharing protocol and, more important, pledged to underwrite all medical and related expenses of all victims, both the dead and the injured. The media redirected resources to cover both the aftermath of the blast and the start of the investigation into its cause. The staff of the three hospitals deluged by a sudden flood of bloodied patients coped admirably, buoyed by the adrenalin of doing necessary work.

Not least, ordinary citizens displayed presence of mind. A surprising number of eyewitnesses posted narratives or pictures online; messages seeking and sending reassurances surged through the country's telcos. Anecdotes about surviving the chaos inside the mall after the explosive went off made the rounds.

Of all the attempts to stave off a sense of panic, however, perhaps the most resonant took place the day after the tragedy, when people trooped back to the rest of the Glorietta mall. Normalcy, with due vigilance, is the bane of terrorists; it is the antidote to terrorism.

And the President? President Macapagal-Arroyo must surely have realized that, precisely because of this damning lack of trust, she and her administration immediately became a suspect. And yet despite that she visited the wounded, vowed to protect the nation against terrorists, offered a P2-million reward for information. In this matter, she did the right thing.

We need, the country needs, to get to the bottom of this act of abomination. We can do that if we keep our heads about us, resolve not to rush to judgment, become more vigilant—and reclaim the normal course of our lives.

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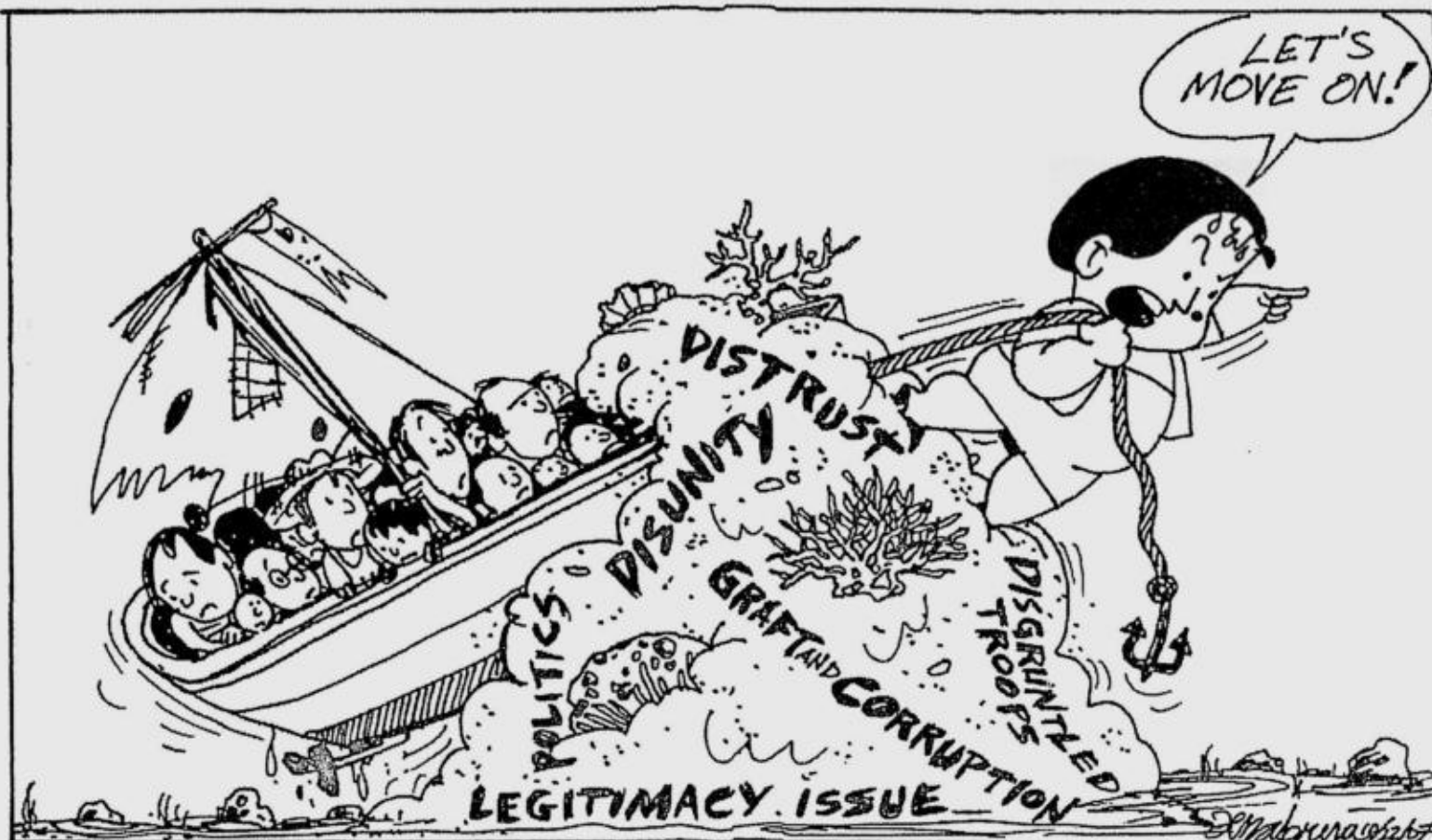
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Bombing eclipsed bribery in Malacañang

A MESSAGE FROM AN ALLEGED RAJAH SOLAIMAN Movement has been received, claiming responsibility for the Glorietta bombing. The message may or may not be genuine. It is so easy for anyone, including a member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, to send such a message. There are the skeptics who say that it is another moro-moro, recalling the fake ambush of Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and other forms of violence during the Marcos regime to justify the imposition of martial law. President Macapagal-Arroyo has not only learned from Marcos but has even exceeded his tactics, corruption and human rights abuses. Marcos now looks like an angel compared to GMA.

But assuming that the Rajah Solaiman Movement and its claim are genuine, the bombing could not have come at a better time for GMA. It diverted attention from the bribe-giving, er, gift-giving, in Malacañang. The bombing is now the biggest story in the newspapers and broadcast news, and it will be so for the next several days at least. It eclipsed the bribery at the Palace that has threatened to bring down the House of GMA.

If she or some of her supporters had panicked and agreed to the bombing to save her throne, it is easy to understand. It may be brazen and merciless—for it sacrificed many lives—but it is a masterstroke.

The person who thought of it deserves a big reward from GMA, and the lethal injection if he or she is caught.

GMA's administration has been one long series of crisis after crisis, the new one always more serious than the last, and she cannot be blamed if she panics. Life for GMA must be hell, knowing that she is the most unpopular president the Philippines ever had, and that her enemies are plotting to oust her legally or, worse, by extra-legal means. She most likely cannot sleep nights worrying. Those bags under her eyes are an indication of that. It would be unkind to wish what she is undergoing on your worst enemy.

And yet GMA herself can stop all that, save

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



herself from all the worry and aggravation, from the torture of an impeachment to the danger of a coup. All she has to do is write two words on a piece of paper: "I resign" and suddenly, like a miracle, all her troubles would be lifted from her shoulders, she would again be able to sleep soundly at night, and be sure that nobody is plotting her downfall anymore.

And curiously, the anger and abhorrence that people feel for her now will suddenly turn to admiration and kindness if she steps down. Instead of going down in history as a tyrant and abuser of human rights, she would instead be remembered and respected as a stateswoman. A monument may even be erected in her honor. In time, she would be regarded as a heroine. Many heads of state and government have resigned before and they are now remembered by their countrymen as great men and women because they knew when it was time to go.

What a nice way to retire, being remembered as a great man or woman, unlike the way Marcos went, chased out of his country by his own countrymen. It is clear which way a person in his right mind would choose to go. So why is GMA not choosing the right way?

There is one sin that is preventing her from going quietly: Pride.

After the grief and the anger over the bombing die down and we focus again on the bribery at the Palace, we will see more clearly how low the leaders of the present administration look at Malacañang, the seat of power and the home and symbol of the presidency. Imagine, giving bribes right in the presidential palace, the home of the

President, openly and in broad daylight. Obviously, they've done it before and think nothing of the insult to Malacañang.

And from the way the bribe-givers and bribe-getters are matter of factly dismissing the bribes as "gifts," "tokens of remembrance," "help," "as usual," etc. giving the sordid act many names except what it really is, a bribe, it is clear that this has been going on for many years in the Arroyo administration. (Presidents Aquino, Ramos and Estrada have denied giving out any cash during their administrations.) And that it has become a habit and officials of the administration both in the executive and legislative departments now look at it as natural as breathing in and breathing out. That bribery has become one of the policies of the Arroyo administration.

When 190 congressmen were called to Malacañang, they knew or had an inkling that they would be bribed and they all went willingly and perhaps expectantly. By their own admission, they had received cash from Malacañang many times before. And because the congressmen had kept quiet about the previous bribes, Malacañang thought nothing of doing it again. They had become so emboldened and so confident that they included a priest, Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio, in the bribe-giving. They did not reckon on the honesty of the priest (priests are supposed to always tell the truth) who soon admitted that he received half a million pesos in Malacañang. And so all hell broke loose and now a panic-stricken administration doesn't know the right thing to do. (The right thing to do is to admit it and take your punishment. The whole nation already knows it anyway.)

But the most important question is did the President know about it—if she did not, in fact, order it herself?

The answer to that is another question: Would an underling dare do that in Malacañang itself if he did not have the nod of the President?

Oh, no, you don't get off so easy

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



like the days before martial law 35 years ago, and given the capability of the GMA regime to tell the truth, which like Marcos' is non-existent, questions will abound in the public mind. Chief of them is motive. Who has the most to gain from bombing a mall owned by the Ayalas in Jejomar Binay's favorite city? Or, a variation on the theme, why did the bombing happen at the very time it did?

Of course terrorists, like God, work in mysterious ways, and it is not always easy to fathom their logic. But for all their battiness, they are not known to want to extend a helping hand to the enemy. The bombing's first, and probably only, beneficiary is the GMA regime. Surely even the local "al-Qaida links" have discovered Napoleon's principle of never interfering when your enemies are busy killing themselves? Surely it could not have escaped their notice that their chief enemy is fighting for her life in light of one scandal after another, each one worse than the one before? The only logic that fuels the al-Qaida theory is that the al-Qaida really finds GMA an ally rather than an enemy, and wants to prop her up because she is their best recruiter in the way that Marcos was the best recruiter for the NPA.

That is all the bombing does: it helps GMA. At the very least, she can—and will if her calls for peace and unity in light of the atrocity are anything to go by—divert attention away from the crisis of credibility, quite apart from legitimacy, engulfing her today. The latest blast, figuratively speaking of course, coming from Ed Panlilio who exposed Malacañang's effort to bribe him with half a million pesos. At the very most, she can use it to go astride a white horse

waving the sword of anti-terrorism, and use that sword against the critics and oppositionists terrorizing her. Or worse, following Marcos, use it to justify emergency rule, the kind of emergency that never ends.

Our work is cut out before us. Whoever wreaked the vile deed last Friday, two things we may not allow to happen in its wake.

First, we may not allow the truth about the ZTE deal, the "Hello Garci" incident as reopened by Doble's testimony and the bare-faced bribing of congressmen and local executives to be the first thing to be buried in the rubble of Luk Yuen in Glorietta 2. We do not do the victims of the bombing a service by forgetting the very things they too must have been furious about before they were sent to the next life, we spit on their graves. By all means let us "leave no stone unturned," the authorities' standard line for things like this, but which takes on awesomely literal meanings here, to discover the authors of that monstrosity. But just as well, let us leave no stone unturned to discover the authors of the bigger bombings that have pinned the nation itself under the rubble, and see if we cannot save those trapped inside. Who knows? Maybe those two investigations will lead to the same source.

But more than that, we may not allow the truth about presidential atrocity to be hijacked or kidnapped by an anti-terrorism campaign of the kind we have been conscripted to in the past. By all means let us put an end to terror, by all means let us grind down the terrorists to heel. But let us do that to all the terrorists and to all forms of terrorism. The worst incidences of terrorism are not the bombings of Metro Manila's malls and railway system, they are the bombings of all the institutions we hold to be good and decent, including democracy itself, their stark ruins jutting out everywhere today and pinning us under the rubble. The biggest terrorists are not to be found in the wilderness of Sulu and Basilan, they are to be found in the luxurious quarters of Malacañang.

Oh, no, you don't get off so easy.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2007

OPINION



Dole-outs and executive privilege

THE PRESIDENT HAS ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION of the Palace cash dole-outs—by a presidential commission no less, which, of course, answers to the President and is controlled by the President. In the present executive privilege epidemic, expect any unfavorable report to be marked privileged!

But, of course, executive privilege has constitutional underpinnings. That is not all, however.

"... Executive privilege, whether asserted against Congress, the courts, or the public, is recognized only in relation to certain types of information of a sensitive character. . . ." So spoke the Supreme Court in *Senate v. Ermita*.

Thus it is also clear that the Court sees the phrase executive privilege not as a magical incantation which produces effect from mere utterance. If I may use a phrase from sacramental theology, it does not work *ex opere operato*. That is, it does not work independently of the person uttering or performing it or the circumstances surrounding it.

We have also had some cases involving confidentiality of government transactions. Since it is almost certain that the shotgun blasts claiming executive privilege will be challenged in court, it may be good to review how the Supreme Court has handled government claims of confidentiality. These can show us how the Court might or should handle claims of executive privilege.

We can begin with *Almonte v. Vasquez*. This involved a subpoena *duces tecum* issued by the Ombudsman in response to charges of illegal disbursement of funds. The head of the EIBB opposed the Ombudsman on the basis, among others, of a claim of privilege. The Court rejected the claim saying that "where the claim of confidentiality does not rest on the need to protect military, diplomatic or other national security secrets but on a general public interest in the confidentiality of his conversations," the claim must yield to a "subpoena considered essential to the enforcement of criminal laws."

So the government lost.

The claim of privilege again came up in the

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.



1998 case of *Chavez v. PCGG*. Here the demand was for the release of information regarding negotiations for a compromise agreement on the Marcos wealth. The Court again said: "At the very least, this jurisdiction recognizes the common law holding that there is a governmental privilege against public disclosure with respect to state secrets regarding military, diplomatic and other national security matters. But where there is no need to protect such state secrets, the privilege may not be invoked to withhold documents and other information, provided that they are examined 'in strict confidence' and given 'scrupulous protection.'"

In the end the Court directed the PCGG "to disclose to the public the terms of any proposed compromise settlement, as well as the final agreement."

Again the government lost, but with a consolation prize. The Court said that there was no obligation to disclose "intra-agency or inter-agency recommendations or communications during the stage when common assertions are still in the process of being formulated or are in the 'exploratory' stage."

Next came *Chavez v. Public Estates Authority (PEA)* which involved a mandamus petition to compel the PEA to disclose all facts on PEA's then on-going renegotiations with Amari Coastal Bay and Development Corporation (Amari) to reclaim portions of Manila Bay. The Court said that the obligation to disclose arises "once the committee makes its official recommendation" and even before a contract is consummated. "Requiring a consummated contract will keep the public

in the dark until the contract, which may be grossly disadvantageous to the government or even illegal, becomes a fait accompli. This negates the State policy of full transparency on matters of public concern."

The big one, of course, was *Senate v. Ermita* where the Supreme Court dealt with the shotgun blast of EO 464. The Court did say that "EO 464, to the extent that it bars the appearance of executive officials before Congress, deprives Congress of the information in the possession of these officials." At the same time, however, the Court said that information may be withheld even from Congress. However, since the issue was about the sweeping gag order in EO 464 and not about specific information being sought by Congress, *Senate v. Ermita* left things hanging.

Even *Senga v. Gudani*, which involved an army general's appearance before the Senate, has left us in suspense. Although the case came up in the wake of EO 464, it was not decided on the basis of executive privilege. It was decided on the basis of the President's Commander in Chief power which demands obedience from subordinates.

As to executive privilege, the Court said, "the Senate could have filed an action with the courts to compel the commanding officers or the Commander in Chief to allow petitioners to testify before it. Under such procedure, the legality of the order could have been put in issue directly before the Court since the Senate is well capacitated to argue why its prerogative in compelling the testimony of petitioners should supersede that of the Commander in Chief in preventing or withholding such testimony." But no challenge came from the Senate.

There you have it. What I see is no less than an invitation to the Senate to bring up specific cases in defense of its prerogative to compel testimony. Certainly there is a rich opportunity for that arising from the telenovela on the ZTE contract. It has been raining EO 464 as if there were no tomorrow. Will the Senate rise to the challenge?

What a mess!

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO



Noralyn Mustafa

politics and tap a vast resource of ideas from the academe, the business community and the professional sector, particularly those who have quietly and persistently engaged themselves in research in the areas of education and the local economy.

An American naval officer who served in this province during the 1920s described Jolo in his memoirs as "the prettiest little town this side of the Pacific."

Before that, Jolo was an international port of call for ships sailing from China, Southeast Asia and Europe.

In my youth, it was the regular route of inter-island passenger and cargo vessels, and even ships from Greece and what was then the USSR came to dock and replenish their supply with our mountain spring water which they claimed was the best-tasting in the world.

Are we now on the way to recapturing at least some of this past glory? We should be, if we redirect our gaze from Ms Arroyo's beleaguered administration to our land and our people. Here is where the dream lies, here is where we can live it again.

While we're at it, what are we to make of this present state of the nation? There is, to begin with, a government that we see and feel only in its never-ending scandals and squabbles, and the invasion of its armed forces into our land so as to score high in the eyes of George W. Bush with his obsessive fight against the twin phantoms of "terrorism" and "weapons of mass destruction."

After all, it is a government that operates on the thinking that these periodic killings and destruction in the countryside are too small a price to pay for that ecstatic high it gets when in international fora it is given a pat on the back with

"good girl, down girl," and more "military modernization" funds to keep the likes of General Garcia and his ilk happy.

Shall we be seduced by the revived move for federalization and its inevitable charter change? An old mistimed dance reentering the ballroom surreptitiously like the Red Death hiding under the deceptive cloak of "decentralization"? Hah! Tell that to the jailed Marines.

This is not a threat, just a statement of facts. With the right leaders, we in Sulu can, without an Arroyo-conceived federalization, declare our independence from this corrupt, fraudulent government any day and survive, believe me.

We have enough natural and human resources, and we can always renew our age-old ties with our southeast neighbors to whom our umbilical cord of religious and cultural commonalities still exists. We can call on Islamic nations for assistance. As a sovereign Islamic nation we will be eligible for membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Most important of all, we have the historical right to do so. It is a right that we don't need to wage a war to assert. It is a right that the whole world will recognize and affirm because of its unquestionable validity.

But how did we get into this terrible mess? Uncanny, how even unremarkable memories return in certain peculiar situations of the present. I had always told my mother she was a mystic, something she laughed off as just another instance of my "New Age thing."

We were looking at a campaign calendar she had just brought home from a schools division conference and I commented on the elegant gowns of the females in the colored picture.

"But it is an unhappy picture. It is a dark picture," she said.

I pointed out that all four people in it were smiling and the photography was excellent.

"Yes, but it is an incomplete picture. The woman looks mean. And the daughter looks meaner."

If only she knew.

Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com

Defeatism

THE LONG VIEW



Manuel L. Quezon III

her aggressiveness aimed at the wrong targets; her instincts, to lash out and vow strong action, misguided and even misguided.

Some criticized the President for rushing to visit and comfort the victims of the blast. Such criticisms were misguided; it was her duty to do so. More valid, I felt, were the criticisms, grumbings, really, that contrasted the government's declaration of extending P5,000 to survivors and P10,000 to the families of the dead, with the infinitely larger sums handed out to officials in the Palace, a week prior to the tragedy. The gesture was well-meaning, but became a kind of tragic farce in light of all that has come before. And that summarizes, quite neatly, the tragedy that is this administration.

If there is one government official who I think should be criticized for adopting entirely the wrong tone in light of this tragedy, it's Secretary Norberto Gonzales. He latched on to every opinion conducive to his obsession with Islamic terrorism while lashing out at every opinion, misguided or not, that placed the government among the groups that could have possibly undertaken the attack.

We don't know who did the attack, but Gonzales has no problems with fear-mongering. Issuing vague warnings, as he's been doing, is precisely what sows terror and puts officialdom in disrepute.

And yet—much as I usually have no inhibitions when it comes to criticism—this is also a time when reflection is called for. Everyone is outraged by the blast; but some are more outraged than others. Their outrage is aimed at those who, this early on, have taken to expressing opinions and

expressing dissatisfaction with the government. We must have unity, they say.

Unity—but to what purpose? Unity in timidity? Unity in willful blindness? Solidarity for no other purpose than to cling together; and then, huddled together, to shiver and cower in the hope it will all go away? Unity in grief and sympathy, yes, by all means; unity in fright, no—and never.

This is a time for asking questions. Not for making accusations, but for pursuing questions. Relentlessly, and perhaps, to some of us, remorselessly. But the questions must be asked, consistently, unyieldingly—and answered, with candor and completeness. This is the only means by which the public can be reassured, and if need be, officials vindicated.

In one of the epigraphs for his book, Shirer quoted Titus Livy on the decline of Rome: "We reached these last days when we could endure neither our vices nor their remedies." Coming on the heels of self-incriminating revelations on the part of members of the ruling coalition, public resistance to rallying around flag and officials normally the personification of our state is sad but understandable. The skepticism has at its heart a possibility as frightening as the thought of more terrorism to come—which is, that terrorism may have become a tool of people within our government and not just those intent on bringing that government down.

The instinct of the Catholic hierarchy has been to summon the faithful to their parishes to pray, a worthy endeavor in which people of other faiths joined in, as well; but there has been no secular call to action. Not least, because it seems there is no one capable of summoning the people to acts of solidarity and defiance. There has been much that's been done to show the mercy and compassion innate in all of us; and yet, too little has been done to direct the mingled sense of anxiety and helplessness toward a tangible demonstration of peaceful resolve. That is what officials are supposed to accomplish, in times of tragedy.

PMA Foundation Day

IN THE HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY, only a few classes have had the honor of providing leadership for the Armed Forces by two or more of its members. During the presidency of Ramon Magsaysay, the class of 1929 of the old Philippine Constabulary Academy (PCA) had Jesus Vargas and Alfonso Arellano. The class of 1962 during the term of President Fidel Ramos had Lisandro Abadia and

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan



Arturo Enrile. The class of 1966 under President Joseph Estrada had Joselin Nazareno and Angelo Reyes. Finally, under President Macapagal-Arroyo, the class of 1970 had Roy Cimatu, Dionisio Santiago and Narciso Abaya, while the class of 1972 had Efrén Abu and Generoso Senga. In the case of Abaya, while he graduated from West Point, class of 1971, he spent a year at the PMA with the class of 1970.

While no member of class 1971 made it to the top AFP position, two members of the class are now senators of the land—Gregorio Honasan and Panfilo Lacson. It would have been three if Zosimo Paredes Jr. of Ang Kapatiran made it during the May elections.

The governor of one of the biggest provinces in the country, Pangasinan, is a member of class 1972, Amado Espino Jr., while the mayor of one Pangasinan town, Sta. Barbara, is Reynaldo Velasco who used to be Espino's upperclassman at the academy, a reversal of fortunes after military service.

In the Medal of Valor count, the class of 1987 holds the record with three winners: Col. Custodio Parcon of the Philippine Marines and Capt. Eduard Lucero and Col. Cirilito Sobejana, both of the Philippine Army.

A number of PMA graduates served as ambassadors in the Philippine foreign service. To name just a few, we have generals Manuel Yan, Fortunato Abat, Francisco Atayde, Clemente Mariano and Voltaire Gazmin. I will probably run out of space if I try to name all of them.

One graduate, Gen. Angelo Reyes, not only served as AFP chief of staff but has held the most number of Cabinet positions in government. After his stint as AFP chief, he was appointed secretary of national defense after which he took over the Department of Interior and Local Government. This was followed by a posting at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and today, he is head of the Department of Energy. Angelo Reyes has cut his teeth in so many assignments that he probably has more experience than most of our Presidents in running the affairs of government. The question is: Can he be elected?

What are the historical origins of this institution that has produced not just military professionals but also leaders in the civilian sector of government?

For many years the Philippine Military Academy traced its roots to the Constabulary School set up by Brig. Gen. Henry T. Allen in 1905. As the PC chief then, Allen issued General Order No. 71, establishing the school in the old Sta. Lucia barracks in Intramuros. It is believed that the order was dated Feb. 17, 1905 and for this reason PMA Foundation Day had always been reckoned from that date.

Sometime in 1991, Dr. Cesar Pobre, a retired AFP colonel who graduated with the class of 1952, was working for a master's degree in history at the University of the Philippines. In the course of his research work, he discovered the fact that "as part of the major organizational efforts at modernizing the Filipino armed forces, the President of the Revolutionary Government and General-in-Chief, Emilio Aguinaldo, issued a decree on October 25, 1898 establishing an Academia Militar in the town of Malolos, Bulacan." As a result of this discovery, Pobre published a paper entitled "A Historical Analysis of the Roots and Growth of the Philippine Military Academy."

In this paper, he was able to establish the following: (1) the date and place where the Academia Militar was established; (2) its mission and objectives; (3) the name of its designated director; (4) the date the sessions began and the sections into which the classes were divided; (5) the different subjects comprising the course of instruction; and (6) the manner of treating failures.

His findings led him to believe that the Academia Militar and not the Constabulary School, had a "better title to being PMA's historical anchor." As expected, there were objections to re-examining PMA Foundation Day. The issue "would not only stir a hornet's nest but it could also be divisive and inflammatory to the emotions." Pobre, however, pointed out that "re-defining the PMA roots, like going over one's lineage, is not a political but a historical exercise. And it will help to understand this point if it is mentioned that history is in essence the search for truth or accuracy."

Pobre's findings on the Academia Militar were confirmed by the National Historical Institute and with the NHI's action, the board of the PMA Alumni Association moved to have the approval of Nazareno, the AFP chief of staff then. This was followed by favorable action from the secretary of national defense, and then from the Office of the President. From the initial research work undertaken by Dr. Pobre to the final approval by President Estrada, the whole process took seven years.

Incidentally the Philippine Army and Navy also trace their history back to 1897-1898, basing their existence on similar decrees laid down by President Aguinaldo.

Perhaps, it is also important to mention Dr. Pobre's credentials. At one time, Pobre was head of the PMA Academic Group and dean of the AFP Corps of Professors. He has an M.A. in History from UP and a doctorate in the same discipline from Karachi University under a SEATO postgraduate scholarship program. He was twice president of the Philippine Historical Association.

On Thursday, Oct. 25, the Philippine Military Academy marks its 109th foundation anniversary.

The Christian Family Movement (CFM) of the Philippines will be holding its 29th National Convention at the Eco-Tech Center in Cebu City from Oct. 26 to 28. The theme for this year's convention is "CFM Beyond 50: Stewardship on Social Concerns." CFM Philippines was formed on Feb. 8, 1956 and pioneered in the development and delivery of family life programs in the country.

THEY SAID

Way of life

"Hard as it is to admit, cheating the government is a way of life. But [it is a way of life] we cannot afford. We cannot let this country hemorrhage or else we will borrow again."

—Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez on tax evasion

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TONY BLAIR, SPEAKING AT THE MEMORIAL service for the victims of the 9/11 tragedy, quoted a passage from "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," Thornton Wilder's novel about five individuals who plunged to their deaths in the collapse of a rope bridge. The passage was this: "But soon we shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth, and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them. Even memory is not necessary for love. There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning."

Assuming the Glorietta tragedy was a bombing, its perpetrators haven't come forward, and thus, we mercifully do not have the opportunity to be selective, when it comes to condemning this act of terrorism, whatever our personal political beliefs. The objectives, the cause, of those who did the bombing are indefensible.

The police, it seems to me, have handled the situation credibly, calmly, in a professional manner. So did the various emergency services.

William L. Shirer, in writing "The Collapse of the Third Republic: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940," took his cue from a quotation from Montesquieu: "If the hazard of a battle, that is, a particular cause, ruins a State, there was a general cause which determined that this State had to perish from a single battle."

A population's instinct, in a time of national tragedy, is to rally around the flag. And yet it seems to me, that while Filipinos from all walks of life rallied to the assistance of their fellow citizens, as a citizenry we have demonstrated a widespread fear and distrust of our high officials. These are feelings our officials may resent, and indeed the President and Secretary Norberto Gonzales have snarled in the face of this public backlash. I for one believe the President's grief and concern are genuine; yet her anger, on the other hand, seems to me misplaced,

On-the-job trainees at DepEd?

OUR COUNTRY CANNOT AFFORD to provide schools with at least one air-conditioned IT room, much less train teachers how to use IT facilities, but it can afford to let millions of pesos' worth of books and facilities go to waste. Where is good planning here? Who are responsible for these oversights? Aren't people put in certain positions because they are supposed to know what ought to be done?

Obviously, many of our officials only get to know what their duties are and how to discharge their duties on the job. But don't we deserve better? Before they purchase things for our schools, they should anticipate what more needs to be put in place before those items can be used and be of benefit to anyone. The basic questions to answer: What are they for? Who will use them? Where will they be placed? When can they be used?

If computers are to be used for the education of the children in far-flung barrios, a plan should be drawn and a budget should be allocated for transporting them. If teachers are to use them, there should be some training, to be given by the suppliers. If the computers do not comply with what was agreed, they should be returned. If the compact disks that come with them are defective, the suppliers should replace them. Are these not basic, commonsensical business practices?

Why should Juan de la Cruz's taxes be wasted on useless items?

If I buy something and realize when I reach home that it is not the right size or color, I will go back to return it and have it replaced. Why buy books that are riddled with errors and do not suit the curriculum? Didn't somebody or some committee approve their purchase? Can

they not be returned to the publishers? Ever heard of products being recalled because they are defective? Teacher manuals and workbooks are supposed to reduce the time teachers spend making instructional materials, thus giving them more time for the people that really matter—the students.

We need not debate on the merits of using computers for producing banners, posters, worksheets and documents, as well as for computing grades. If they cannot be used, why bother purchasing them in the first place?

The Philippines can do better. Our educational system can produce better students and graduates. We simply need people with the intellect, experience and heart to do what it takes to improve our educational system.

—LOELLA ESCANTILLA LAPAT,
loella_l@yahoo.com

Manual jobs not for our graduates

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER titled "A society of masters and slaves." (INQUIRER, 10/15/07) I believe in the dignity of labor. However, I would not encourage any of my children to be just drivers or garbage collectors or firemen or policemen or carpenters or plumbers—the reason being, these jobs are classified as jobs for undergraduates only.

Our children should aim for higher education and they will get better paying jobs than those that high school graduates will.

Obviously, should they fail to get a bachelor's or master's degree, then they can just go for the manual jobs.

—LOUIS G. PAYAWAL,
louispayawal@comcast.net

Pacquiao insulted all Manileños

MANILA SHOULD STOP WASTING its time, effort, resources and finances on someone who has virtually abandoned his fans in favor of his "idol," former Manila mayor and now Environment Secretary Lito Atienza. Manny Pacquiao is not the only Filipino boxing champ, anyway.

He has forgotten that without his fans, he is a forgotten hero. It would be best for Manila City Hall not to take Pacquiao's virtual abandonment of his Manileño fans sitting down. It should consider replacing him as the city's "adopted

son." After all, Pacquiao himself had declared in a press conference that he is the adopted son of Atienza, not of Manila. The statement was an insult to the City of Manila which had prepared a hero's welcome for him after every fight of his in the past.

Better yet, if Manila just spends its time, effort, resources and finances on its unsung heroes and its residents and, more importantly, on public service.

—OLIVER G. TUICO JR.,
otj1@yahoo.com

After Imelda era, endless 'bleeding'

"IMELDA: NO REGRETS, NO shame." (INQUIRER, 10/9/07) Very interesting article. Imelda Marcos is certainly a very charismatic woman. Personally, I admire and respect her.

The INQUIRER wrote that "she will always be associated with a kleptocracy that bled the Philippines dry."

Keep in mind that subsequent leaders continue doing just that—bleeding the Philippines dry.

I am amazed that after all these post-Marcos years, there is still so much to be bled and so much bleeding.

—LILIA SEVILLANO,
lumnay@rocketmail.com

Demolition job vs Muslim

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER TITLED "WHY Muslim topped search for MSU president" of one Sultan Camar Hasnal. (INQUIRER, 10/11/07) The letter was intended to smear my credentials as the top nominee for the presidency of the Mindanao State University, impede the release of my appointment and justify the holding of a new search. Let me stress the following points:

First, Hasnal and the Mindanao Sultanate Group do not exist.

Second, I did not top the short-list of presidential contenders because three of the five-man 2005 Search Committee were my bosom friends. The allegation is too unfair to then CHED Commissioner Cristina Padolina (chair), Undersecretary Mona Valisno (representing Malacañang), former NEDA Director General Ponciano Intal, the late Education Secretary Ricardo Gloria and then Alumni Regent Jusie Roxas. None of the five, all highly reputable, was or is my bosom friend. They only did their job objectively, and more importantly, did not bend to pressure.

Third, the criteria adopted in the evaluation are those commonly used in the selection of heads of higher education institutions in the country and abroad. I ranked No. 1 in the short list of three (out of 21 screened applicants) simply because I got more points (94.6, far higher than the second placer's 87). In other words, the committee upheld the long-established, worldwide tradition of academic meritocracy. The primacy of this tradition in ensuring academic excellence among our universities is the main reason several prominent higher education leaders in the country (like former UP president Jose Abueva and former CHED chair and DLSU president Bro. Rolando Dizon) are interested in the selection of MSU president.

Fourth, it is not true that there were MSU alumni and constituents who questioned the recommendation of the Search Committee. Only a few of the losing aspirants (including "Hasnal") were unhappy about the results. My bid for the MSU presidency was anchored primarily on my academic qualifications, track record in university governance, my being a native of Marawi and Lanao and my multi-sectoral nomination by the seven autonomous campuses of MSU, including all chancellors and most of the college deans.

Fifth, the allegation that the Search Committee overlooked the six charges/cases filed against me with the Ombudsman is another blatant lie. The committee required all of us to submit documents pertaining to pending and resolved cases and clearances from the Ombudsman, Sandiganbayan and the Civil Service Commission. The cases were all dismissed by the Ombudsman in 1999-2001. My folder in Malacañang includes my new clearances from these offices.

Sixth, I have nothing personal against Gen. Ricardo de Leon for whom I have a high regard until now. I and my supporters did not complain when he was appointed acting president in September 2005 because Malacañang clarified that he would serve as transition president for only six months to restore law and order in MSU-Marawi, after which the choice of the Search Committee would assume office as the next regular MSU president.

Finally, my being the top nominee for MSU president was confirmed by the Ricafort Committee created by Secretary Eduardo Ermita in September 2007, which also cleared me of the smear issues. I hope the aspirant hiding behind "Hasnal" will be professional enough to accept the results of the rigorous four-month search.

—MACAPADO A. MUSLIM, Ph.D.,
Mindanao State University

Prof in hazing not CEU's

THIS PERTAINS TO THE NEWS ARTICLE TITLED "Nursing professor charged." (INQUIRER, 10/11/07)

The report mentioned one Cesar Dalilag as a nursing professor of Centro Escolar University (CEU) who was charged with a violation of the Anti-Hazing Law for allegedly beating up a nursing student named Benedicto Reyes Sta. Teresa III after the latter refused to join the Apo fraternity's final initiation rites in March 2006.

We would like to set the record straight: no professor by the name of Cesar Dalilag was or is employed by CEU. Moreover, Sta. Teresa was enrolled as a nursing student of CEU during the first and second semesters of school year 2002-2003; in April 2003, upon his request, he was given an honorable dismissal along with his transfer credentials.

—MA. CRISTINA D. PADOLINA, Ph.D.,
president, Centro Escolar University,
9 Mendiola St., San Miguel, Manila

My report was based on official records from Branch 6 of the Manila RTC. Sta. Teresa's sworn affidavit to the police clearly and repeatedly referred to Dalilag as a nursing professor of Centro Escolar University.

—ALLISON W. LOPEZ,
reporter, Inquirer



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Accident angle in Makati explosion probed

From page A1

Barias said this finding raised the possibility that the blast was caused by an accident rather than an explosive device. "We are also looking into that. All angles are being explored."

The body of a woman partly covered by debris was recovered from the basement area. Most of the scores of wounded were released from three hospitals, except for three victims, police said. (See related story on Page A1.)

On Saturday, before a National Security Council meeting in Camp Crame, Barias told reporters that investigators had taken samples from the first floor and had found no trace of nitrates on them.

"The explosion damaged the floor, under which revealed an underground which serves as a tool room. There was supposed to have been an oil, water and grease depot there," Barias said then.

The Associated Press reported that three investigators said fumes might have leaked from a huge diesel fuel container, or methane gas from a septic tank, and ignited in the tightly enclosed concrete basement.

Once the blast site has been drained, it will be easier to determine whether there is any evidence of sabotage, such as bomb shrapnel. The investigators said they were trying to secure footage from security cameras near the area from the mall's owners.

Traces of explosive

The PNP Crime Laboratory and the Philippine National Police (PNP) Bomb Data Center reported earlier that investigators had found traces of RDX, an ingredient used in explosives including C4, which is used by the military.

But yesterday, Barias said the

presence of RDX would have to be verified by "additional testing."

In a television interview, Alfie Reyes, corporate spokesperson of Ayala Land Inc. which owns the mall, said the basement was occupied by a tenant at the Makati Supermarket. "We are also trying to obtain information from them," Reyes said.

An investigator, who requested anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to reporters, told the INQUIRER that initial tests done by bomb experts from the United States revealed no traces of RDX or any other explosive material.

The source said at least six Americans from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US Navy SEALs and an Explosive Ordnance Division unit were helping in the probe. Later in the afternoon, experts from Australia arrived to join the inquiry.

The American experts, the source said, tested six samples from different locations at least three times. "There were samples taken from 500 meters from the blast site and also at the seat or source of the blasts, in this case the hole that was caused."

Bunker oil container

He also confirmed that the blast originated from a bunker oil container the size of a 20-foot container van located near a septic tank. The area also contained air-conditioning exhaust vents, a generator set, empty diesel tanks, and fuel that might have emitted dangerous fumes.

"The confluence of the mixture of gasses trapped inside a confined space will look for an outlet and needs release," the expert said.

The source also noted that the blast did not cause fires, unlike a C4 or TNT explosion which causes black or gray smoke. "The kind of

damage we saw is consistent with enormous pressure being released. Gasses like methane don't show up in the kind of tests already done."

Barias denied reports the PNP has a suspect in its custody.

More police fielded

He said the NCRPO was still under full alert "to restore normalcy" in the metropolis. A full alert means all of the 15,000 policemen in Metro Manila will have to stay at their posts at all times.

Barias also said he had fielded an extra 2,000 policemen in the streets. Another 500 soldiers from the military's National Capital Region Command have also been deployed.

The government has offered P2 million for information leading to those responsible for the incident while the Makati City government put up an additional P1 million.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said in a telephone interview he expected a clearer picture of the incident before tomorrow's National Security Council meeting called by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We are satisfied with the performance of the police," Gonzales said.

Scotland Yard probe

Yesterday, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. called for an independent probe of the Glorietta incident, citing the United Kingdom's Scotland Yard as prime candidate as impartial investigators.

"The people demand nothing less than a credible investigation of the tragic incident to dispel any suspicion over any attempt to influence or manipulate the outcome of the probe to ensure that it hews to government's

version of this gruesome crime event at the expense of truth," said Pimentel.

He warned that the Glorietta incident "may just be the start of a wave of public disturbances which may be used by the administration to justify the declaration of a national emergency."

Claim of responsibility

In an interview with dzBB radio, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the absence of any concrete findings more than 48 hours after the blast only fanned speculation that the government had the most to gain from the bomb attack as a diversion from the contro-

versies it had to grapple with.

Both Pimentel and Lacson agreed that nobody was taking seriously the reported claim by the so-called Rajah Solaiman Movement that it was responsible for the blast.

The Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines is "validating" the purported claim of the movement described as a small extremist group comprised of Muslim converts based in Metro Manila and Pampanga, said Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, AFP spokesperson. With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Nikko Dizon, AP

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Her life was not even starting yet, says pa

From page A1

ruins, Marcos said he felt how keen his loss was when he went to the room of Janine, a nursing sophomore at the Makati Medical Center.

"I somehow sensed that she wanted me to go to the place where she died and to light a candle and to pray for her," he said.

"Immediately, I asked my wife and my other children to get ready. We had to get there."

'I am Julian Marcos'

Security guards at the mall blocked their path.

"I introduced myself. I said, 'I'm Julian Marcos, the father of one of those who died. We're here because we want to pray for her,'" he recalled.

His blood rose when the guards said they had to get permission. In anger, the 48-year-old retired military man said: "If you were this strict at the mall entrance yesterday, then my daughter would be alive today. I'm not a bad person so why are you blocking me?"

After consulting with their bosses at Ayala Land, the guards finally let the family through, escorted by policemen.

"Looking at the wreck, I thought there was really no way my daughter could have survived this," he said. "I thought, 'If only I were here, maybe I could have protected you.'"

They lit a candle, placed it on the floor and prayed.

"In my mind, I spoke to her: 'I love you very, very much. Wherever you are, you know how much I love you and want to give everything to you,'" he said, in tears.

Unanswered text messages

Marcos had high hopes for his daughter.

"I wanted her to live a happy, successful life. I wanted her to pursue a degree in physical therapy once she had graduated," he said.

On Friday morning, Janine, a dean's lister, had stayed up till 4 a.m. studying for her exams. "She woke up at 5:30, quickly pulled on her clothes, and went to school," he said.

At 1:30 p.m., the family heard about the blast at the Glorietta mall.

"My wife sent her text messages, asking if her exams were finished," he said. When no reply came, they began calling her phone. When no one answered, they began to worry.

Marcos said: "One of her classmates called us and we asked her if she had seen our daughter. Then she began crying. That's when I knew."

"I wish it had been me. At least if I died, I had already led a full life. But her life was only beginning."

He said Janine was just passing by the mall on her way back home.

The littlest details of everything he could remember about Janine

seemed to give him comfort.

"She always made her mother a cup of Milo in the morning. Whenever she was home, she would bang the gates and we would drop her the keys. Whenever she was free, she would dance around with her sister," he said.

"And she liked to make sketches. She was talented at drawing cartoons. She could have been an artist."

Marcos said his daughter was cheerful around friends but very shy around strangers.

"She never had a boyfriend. I even doubt if any boy had touched her hands," he said. "But now it's all gone."

Friends to the end

Jee Ann de Gracia, 25, normally brought home-cooked food whenever she had lunch at her office near Glorietta 2.

On Fridays, she and two of her friends—Ceasar Niño Vidamo and Maureen de Leon—would go out for a quick lunch to catch up on each other's lives.

The Glorietta 2 explosion killed the hopes and dreams of the three friends—and of Jee Ann's mother, Jeanette.

"The three of them were good friends," Jeanette said, her voice shaking.

Rescue teams retrieved the bodies of Jee Ann and Niño a few hours after the blast. It took them until Saturday night to find Maureen's body.

"They were together. Maybe the force of the explosion separated them and that's why it took a while to find them," Jeanette said in Filipino.

Last kiss from Jee Ann

Her daughter graduated cum laude from a computer science course at the STI College and was set to work in Singapore as a computer specialist next year.

Such was Jee Ann's excitement over her plans that she treated her siblings—Jojo, Jeandy and Jeffrey—to nice food and clothes a week before the tragedy struck.

On the morning of Friday, Jee Ann had already left their rented house in Sta. Cruz, Manila, when she returned home to kiss her father, Andres, goodbye.

"She said, 'Papa, I haven't kissed you yet,'" her mother said. Jee Ann wore jeans and a striped black and white shirt to work that day.

When images of the blasted mall and the victims were shown on TV, Jee Ann's sister Jeandy thought she recognized her older sister's blood-streaked clothes.

But the mother clung to the hope that her daughter was back in the office. A call from Smart Communications, her daughter's employer, confirmed her fears.

"They told me Jing (Jee Ann's nickname) was not back at the office yet. One of my children tried calling up her cell phone, but there was no ringing," she added.

The next time, she saw Jee Ann was at the Makati Medical Center, where she was asked to identify her body.

Justice for Niño Vidamo

The father of Niño Vidamo blamed the government for the death of his son and said he was not hopeful that those responsible would be brought to court.

"We do not expect justice for my son's death. To those who did this, you owe me one," Ceasar Vidamo, a former Philippine Constabulary colonel, told the INQUIRER in his home in Malabon City, where the wake for Niño was being held.

"My son was not a victim of an accident, but a collateral damage of a government who wants to divert attention from the present political crisis it's facing," he said.

Niño's wife, Zenaida, recounted her disappointment at President Macapagal-Arroyo's reaction when they met her at the Veronica Funeral Homes in Pasay City on Friday evening.

"What I would have wanted to hear from her was she would go after the perpetrators and bring them to justice," Zenaida said.

GMA offer spurned

Instead, she said Ms Arroyo asked her if she had work and promised to give her one. She said Ms Arroyo also promised a scholarship to another of her sons.

"My son just died of a bomb explosion which could have been carried out by people who could be hurt by what is going on, and all she could tell me was a promise of a job... and a scholarship for my other son," Zenaida said.

She said that after Ms Arroyo left the room, a woman aide called the mothers of the victims to another room.

In the room, she said she saw the aide handing out envelopes saying in Filipino: "Just a small help from the President."

"I could not feel her sincerity, I was offended by her action, so I refused the money," Zenaida said.

She said that although her family needed assistance, as Niño was the sole breadwinner, she found it offensive to be given money that way.

"What's that, a payment for the life of my son? We expected the President to tell us she would go after the perpetrators but instead she asked if we have a job."

She said she felt like being handed "trick" money to stop grieving.

"Oh, stop crying, here's some money for your son's death," Zenaida said, crying.

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GUEST storyteller Olsen Racela reads a book to children during the INQUIRER "Read Along" session at the children's area of National Bookstore in Edsa Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Mandaluyong City. ROGER CARPIO

'Read along' in mall ...

From page A1

Then they moved on to a bigger venue—National Book Store at the Edsa Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Mandaluyong City—featuring TV show host and Bright Child Junior Ambassador of Goodwill for the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Bernard Joecel "Tolits" Forbes, freelance storyteller Jay Menes, and returning readers Olsen Racela and Mar Deo Cxelci Zuñiga.

Nine-year-old Tolits, who came to the session straight from his class at Angelicum College in Quezon City, read "Hari ng Kalsada," a story of two jeepney drivers learning about the benefits of using alternative fuels.

More than 100 children, accompanied by their parents and guardians, trooped to the session, making the event the biggest Read-Along crowd-drawer so far. Book browsers minding their own business joined the session, attracted by the crowd. Most everyone sat on mats in the children's area.

The "Hari" story, conceived by the Sustainable Energy Development Program (SEDP) of the US Agency for International Development and the US Department of Energy, was originally written in English by the SEDP's Dhee Paredes and first read by US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney during the National Earth Day celebration on April 20.

Paredes herself translated the story into Filipino, which, in turn, became a comic book with brother-in-law, Radel Paredes, render-

ing illustrations. Paredes is a columnist of the Cebu Daily News, sister publication of the INQUIRER.

The Filipino version was first read by Little Earth Angel of 2007 Denise Mikaela Abuan in the Sept. 8 Read-Along session.

Tolits admitted to being nervous when he began reading the story "since it was my first time," he said.

Denia Gamboa, chief of the public affairs and information department of the CWC, said the SEDP's "Hari ng Kalsada" was in line with the Bright Child Program's mission of ensuring the development and well-being of children nationwide.

"The CWC also promotes the four rights of children—protection, development, survival and participation. We partnered with SEDP because for a child to enjoy these rights, a clean environment is necessary," Gamboa said.

Sponsors of the session were the SEDP, the National Book Store Foundation, Hiyas Publishing, Digna Aquino, Library Hub Coordinator of the Division of Pasig and San Juan cities.

The next INQUIRER Read-Along session is on Oct. 27, 10 a.m., at the INQUIRER office on Chino Roces Avenue in Makati City. Movie actress Ara Mina is the featured reader.

Interested parties may call Ellen Caparros or Girlie Refran at Tel. No. 897-8808, local 329. Those interested in donating books to the program may also send an e-mail to inquirer-readalong@inquirer.com.ph.

Vote-buy raps fly, gimmicks abound

From page A1
cise has been marred by vote-buying and flying voters.

Parents and SK candidates in Barangay Poblacion North have allegedly engaged in registering SK voters who are not from the barangay, said Councilor Michael Tiongson of Solano town.

In Aritao town, residents said some local officials were virtually dictating the outcome of the barangay elections by handpicking those who were supposed to file their candidacies and forcing others to withdraw.

Candidates belonging to one slate in Don Mariano Perez village in Bayombong town have been conducting vaccination of pet dogs. "I wish it is election period every day because our barangay and SK officials become hyperactive during these times. They are so nice, so hardworking, so visible, always smiling and shaking hands left and right," said Dexter Divad of the Solano police.

In Laoag City, former Vice Mayor Marlon Manuel said the voters were not vulnerable to vote-buying because they would likely choose candidates who are their relatives.

"There is no room for 3Gs (goons, guns, gold). When they go to the precincts, voters will think about whether the candidate has been a good neighbor, if he had helped him in some way or whether he is a relative," he said.

Dynasties

But like any election, the SK and barangay polls are used as vehicles for families to either perpetuate or expand political dynasties.

In Laoag, those joining the polls include Chevylle Fariñas, wife of Mayor Michael Fariñas, who is running unopposed.

Ruben Ablan, a son of Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan Jr., is also running for barangay captain.

Except for a shooting incident in Bolinao, Pangasinan, on Friday night, in which two village leaders—one of them a council candidate—were hurt, the start of the campaign period was peaceful, police said.

For some candidates in Benguet, it's pay-back time.

Several candidates have asked for financial help from provincial officials whom they helped get elected in May.

Almost every candidate in Baguio City were discussing waste management in their campaign.

Central Luzon

In Barangay San Vicente in Tarlac City, streamers by a candidate for barangay chair hope to convey the message that if he wins, his barangay would be as merry as the inside of the popular "Bahay ni Kuya."

A slate of candidates in Barangay Sto. Cristo is trailed by a procession of placard-carrying supporters and children, in black body paint, dancing in Ati-Atihan fashion.

In Barangay Matatalaib, five candidates



CANDIDATES for barangay elections in Tejeros in Makati City campaign on the streets. RODOLFO ROTON

No SK poll in youth-less Kalayaan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—KALAYAAN Island, located in the Spratlys in the South China Sea, has two candidates for barangay captain of its only village, Pag-Asa.

The island-town has a land area of less than a square kilometer and 273 registered voters.

"Whoever is elected automatically becomes the chair of the ABC (Association of Barangay Captains). He joins the municipal council as ex-officio member, and the

provincial association of barangay captains," said Allan Arinos, a municipal employee.

There is no Sangguniang Kabataan election in Kalayaan, as there is not a single registered youth voter there.

Election officials said arrangements have been made for a military plane to transport the election inspectors to the island on Election Day. They will be flown back to this city after the voting. *Redempto Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

for councilor called themselves the "Voltes 5" in streamers and placards.

Elections in Barangay San Vicente, though, is something to watch out for. The top position is being contested by former Tarlac City Vice Mayor Tess Cabal and former Councilor Roy Escalona.

In Pampanga, the second day of the campaign period took on a fiesta-like atmosphere on Saturday when candidates held motorcades.

The motorcades, at times tailed by honking tricycles and pedicabs, wound through the village roads. Some candidates threw candies and campaign leaflets to spectators.

Aeta candidate

In the Mabulacat village of Marcos, Larry Lingay is the lone Aeta among six candidates for barangay captain. Nine Aeta men, however, are running for councilor.

Also in Mabulacat, barangay captain candidate Jun Castro coined a catchy phrase for his candidacy. In posters, he projected himself as the "katulong sa barangay (your aide in the village)."

Siblings of politicians have joined the race. Atlas, the son of Mabulacat Mayor Marino Morales, is running for village chief of Dau. His younger brother is eyeing the chairmanship of the SK.

In Nueva Ecija, none of the pomp and glitter of the past local elections have been observed in the campaign trail.

The candidates, either riding on tricycles, motorcycles and "kolong-kolong" (motorcycle-driven cart used to transport hogs), were seen going on a house-to-house campaign.

In Tabuating in San Leonardo town, an early substitution of candidate happened Friday when candidate for council member, Numeriano Sapiandante, was shot dead while campaigning. His younger brother, Atanacio, took his place.

Candidates in Bataan have been knocking on doors of village mates to ask them what they can give in exchange for their votes.

In Bulacan, candidates in uniform colored shirts, vests and native woven hats went around the villages of Bulakan, Paombong, Hagonoy and Guiguinto to solicit votes.

Southern Luzon

At least 800 villages in southern Luzon are under police watch. Some of them are regarded as "areas of immediate concern" or those where there is intense political rivalry and presence of armed groups.

Less colorful and photocopied campaign materials are posted on mini billboards at village entrances.

Candidates are seen conducting house-to-house visits to introduce themselves and distribute fliers.

"We are also going to be conducting a candidates' forum so those who are running can introduce themselves and their platforms," said a village resident in Daraga, Albay.

In Laguna, candidates attended Mass at the start of the campaign period to pray for victory.

In San Pablo City, candidates had themselves blessed by their parish priest after attending Mass as their way of ensuring that they win.

Palawan's largest village in terms of land area and population, Barangay San Pedro, has more than 300 candidates vying for seven slots in the village council.

"Many are running for council member for the allowance. It is a measure of unemployment and the lack of livelihood in the place," Ruel Caralipio, a radio station manager, said.

Vote-buying

In many barangays in Cebu City, candidates launched their campaign early Friday with motorcades for the well-funded and house-to-house visits for those with small campaign kitty.

In Leyte, a barangay captain in Tacloban City admitted that she would pay each voter as much as P500 in return for their sup-

port. She is facing four rivals for the post she has held for the past five years.

Lorenzo Castellano, who was village chief of Ortiz in Iloilo City for 12 years, said vote-buying was also happening in the barangay elections although these were supposedly a nonpartisan exercise.

Castellano, who is running for barangay councilor, said candidates were spending larger amounts to win because the monthly honorarium for officials was significant, especially in big barangays.

He said some candidates were spending from P50-P100 to buy votes.

While candidates are only allowed to spend P3 per voter, campaign materials have become expensive and sophisticated.

In the past, candidates used posters made from sack, Manila paper or cartolina but some candidates now have glossy pictures and slogans on tarpaulin, Castellano said.

Campaign handbills used to be handwritten but these are now photocopied or printed, he added.

In Cebu City, some candidates have their own headquarters blaring campaign jingles while others have to make do with handing out handbills or pasting campaign posters.

Still others showed their well-funded campaign machinery during the first day of the campaign period by holding a motorcade.

Uncontested polls

In Maguindanao, provincial administrator Norie Unas said 90 percent of elective posts in the province's 234 barangays would not be contested.

The situation is similar to what took place in the province during the May 14 elections, when most elective posts were dominated by politicians identified with Gov. Daru Andal Ampatuan.

"Barangay candidates who were endorsed from the level of community caucuses will be unopposed. And there are still efforts in the consultation level to make it 100-percent unopposed, depending on the outcome of further consultation," Unas said.

In Digos City in Davao del Sur, candidates wearing colorful T-shirts distributed leaflets with their superimposed photos and asking people to vote for them.

But in rebel-influenced areas, the mood is different. In at least five villages of Pikit in North Cotabato, security remains uncertain.

Mohali Salik, whose group petitioned the Comelec to move the voting from Rajamuda, Baguinding, Bulik Proper, Barongis and Kabsalan to Gili-Gili, said armed men had been warning residents against voting on Oct. 29.

In Parang, Shariff Kabunsuan, Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said he was seeking the help of Muslim religious leaders for the conduct of peaceful balloting.

The police said 199 of the region's 2,475 barangays were deemed risky for both voters and candidates because of the presence of armed groups.

In Pagadian City, the barangay elections have become an opportunity for at least seven local journalists to enter politics. One of them is running for village chair while six others are aspiring to be council members.

Reports from Gabriel Cardinosa, Peter La. Julian, Melvin Gascon, Delmar Cariño, Cristina Arzadon, Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*; Russell Arador, Anselmo Roque, Tonette Orejas, Carmela Reyes and Greg Refracion, *Inquirer Central Luzon*; Ephraim Aguilar, Jaymee Gamil, Romulo Ponte, Gerardo Gene Querubin and Madonna Virola, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*; Junex Napallacan, Nestor Burgos Jr., Carla P. Gomez, Joey Gabieta and Ven Labro, *Inquirer Visayas*; and Nash Maulana, Edwin Fernandez, Allan Nawal, Aquiles Zonio, Charlie Señase and Dennis Santos, *Inquirer Mindanao*

Acts of heroism rise from the rubble

From page A1

truck when four of the wounded stepped out of the exit of the mall and came rushing to them, pleading for help.

"I remember they were three women and a man. They had deep cuts in the arms, torso and head," Melendres said.

Adrenaline pumping

"My team took them one by one to the ambulance for first aid," he said. "A few seconds later, I saw the first body."

"Our adrenaline was high and we wanted to attend to everyone, but we didn't have enough men."

Just then, others who were unhurt saw their predicament and began to help.

Someone helped carry an elderly man who had apparently broken his leg. Another man was seen assisting a bloodied woman.

Yet another was heard whispering words of comfort to an uninjured but shell-shocked little girl.

Nameless ones

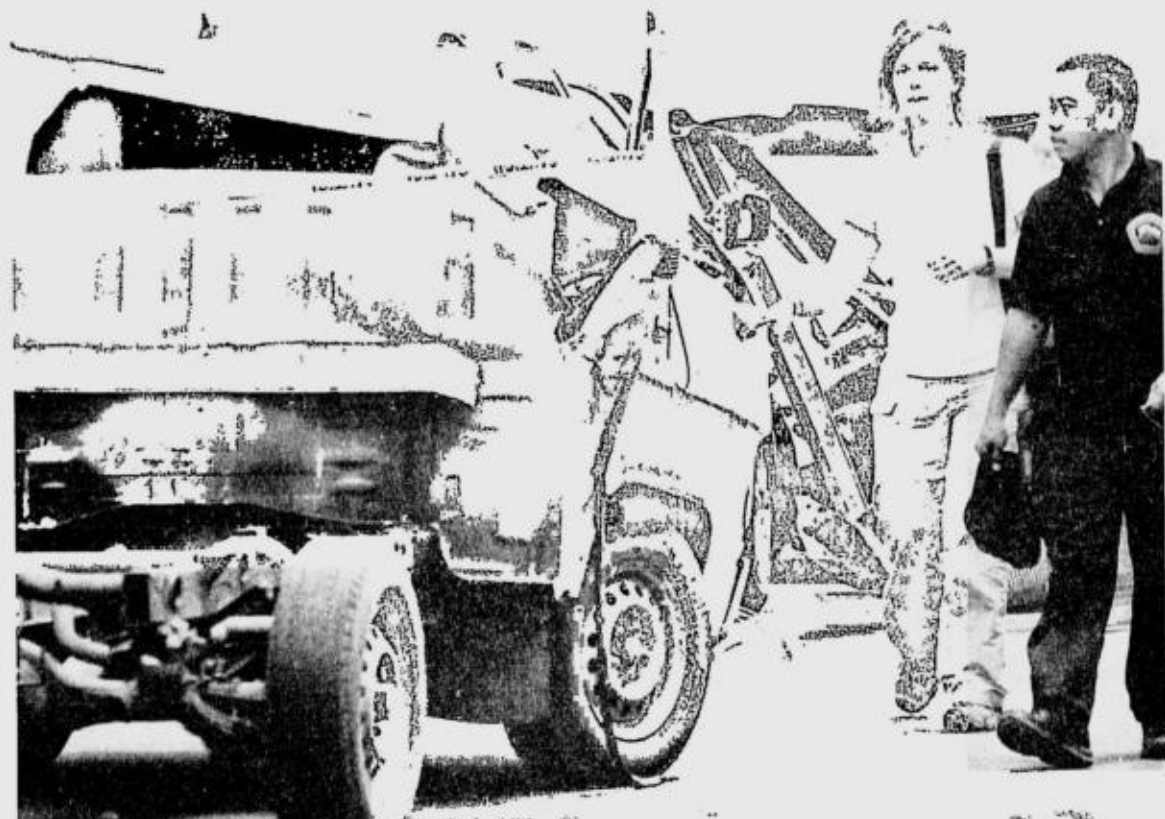
"When they came and volunteered help, I felt humbled," Councilor Jejomar Erwin Binay said of the doctor and the nurse who had offered medical assistance.

He did not even get the chance to ask for their names.

"I thought that it's during difficult times like this that our being Filipino comes out," said Binay, who heads the Makati Rescue Team and is the son of Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Melendres, the operation officer of the Makati Rescue Team, recalled other heroic acts.

"There was a security guard who had ash all over him and there was blood on his shirt, but he was helping others



AN AMERICAN walks outside the upscale Glorietta shopping mall, site of Friday's explosion that killed at least 11 people, in the financial district of Makati City.

out," Melendres said.

Easing the burden

He saw the guard cradling an injured woman and taking her to an ambulance. "Then he rushed back to the site to help others even if he had no way of knowing if the structure was secure," he said.

More than the physical assistance, Melendres said the psychological impact of getting help from others contributed in a big way to their mission—and, perhaps, helped make their work more bearable.

"There were many people out there who helped us, and though I don't know them all, I'm very thankful to them," he said.

Reinforcements to the squad arrived within 10 minutes. "In all, 40 of our 45 members came

to assist the survivors and retrieve the dead," he said.

Color-coding

Binay said the rescue teams had a color-coordinated system for dealing with victims.

"Green is for those who are OK, yellow for those with minor injuries, red for those who need immediate attention, and black is for the dead," said Binay, who also took part in the rescue operations.

But even those classified as green sometimes needed help, too.

Binay recalled two little girls, apparently unhurt, who were clinging to their mother whose leg had been fractured.

"The younger one looked like she was fine, but the older girl would not let go of her mother. So I talked to the mother and told her to go home once the

doctor had seen to her. They were obviously traumatized," he said.

Improvised morgue

Another young man who was covered with dust appeared unhurt, but he looked stunned and would not respond. "I told him to just relax, 'You're OK, you're OK,'" Binay said.

Melendres' team retrieved four of the first bodies recovered from the site. "We made a temporary morgue near Park Square where we deposited the bodies," he said.

"When we handle cadavers, we take care that the dignity of person is preserved," Melendres said.

"One of the victims was decapitated, so I placed the head near the body and wrapped it in a blanket. We wrapped all the bodies in blankets so that their

privacy is kept."

Binay and Melendres have had plenty of experience in rescue work, having responded to previous major blasts in Metro Manila, including the Rizal Day bombings in 2000 and the Valentine's Day bus bombing in Makati two years ago.

They also helped in retrieval operations during the tragic stampede that marred a noon-time show at the Ultra stadium in Pasig City last year.

Binay, who received training in rescue work in the United States, said doing rescue work

meant keeping one's emotions in check.

"When you're at the scene, you just cannot allow your feelings to come out. You may feel pity or sympathy, but you have to hold back and focus on the job," he said.

Melendres, who has not gone home for the past two days, said all the rescue team members would undergo stress debriefing at the end of their mission.

"It's only then when we can let go and release all our pent-up feelings," he said.

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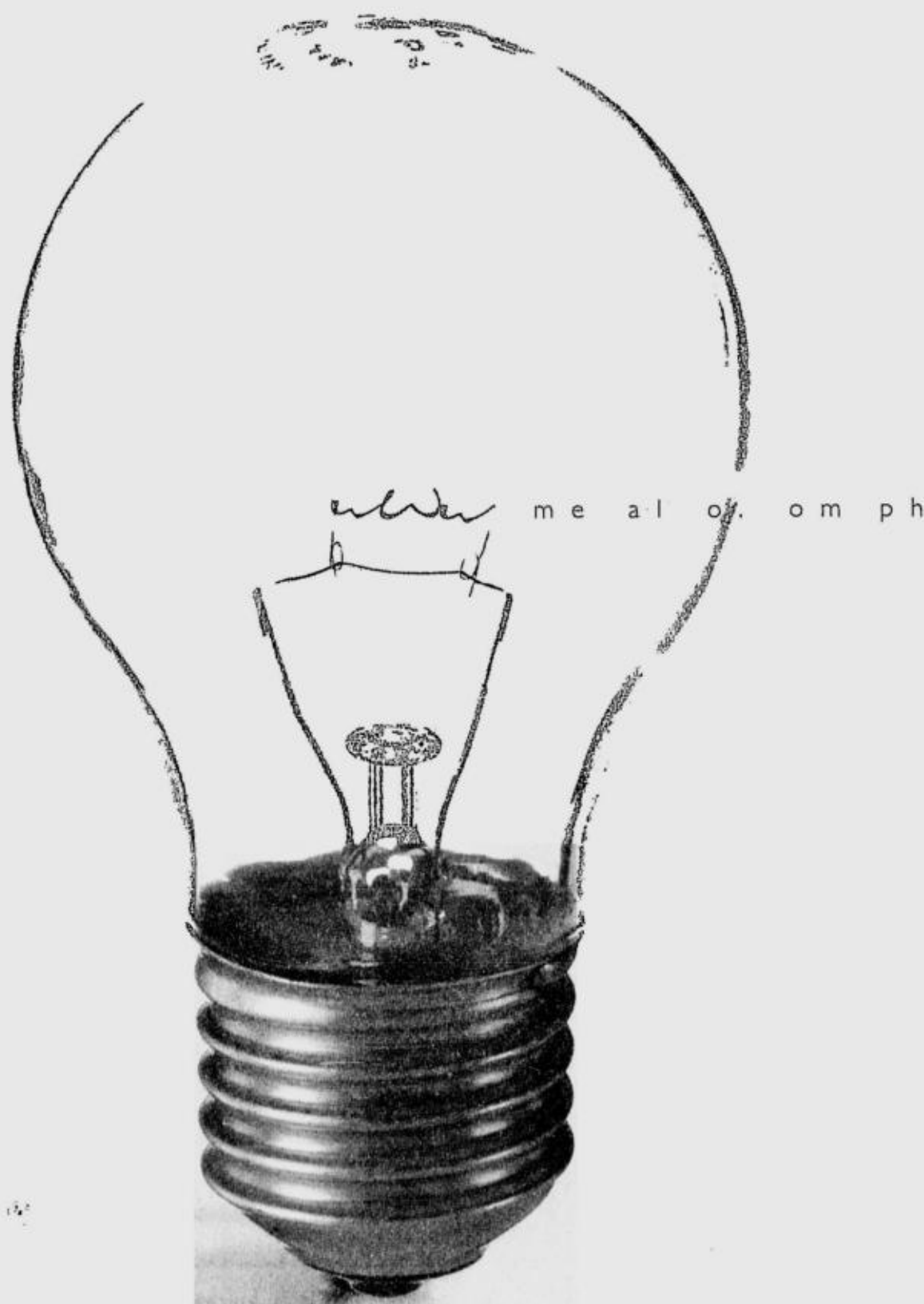
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Agrarian Reform Initiative for Agricultural Economic Empowerment
KEY TO GROWTH & PRODUCTIVITY

OPEN LETTER

To H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
Malacañang Palace, Manila

Your Excellency,

We write to bring to your attention the true, and tragically sad state of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and the equally dire conditions of the farmer beneficiaries whose lives are supposed to be uplifted by CARP. It is our hope that their dreams, and your own recent call for a Reformed CARP during your State of the Nation Address will be genuinely answered and acted upon by our legislators. We hear you, Madame President, and our people need your help.

Most respectfully yours,

The Metro Bacolod Chamber of Commerce and Industry

A COVENANT FOR GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE DELEGATES TO THE VISAYAS AREA BUSINESS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HOSTED BY THE METRO BACOLOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AT L'FISHER HOTEL FROM 7-9 SEPTEMBER 2007, ENTITLED:

"TO ADVOCATE AND SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY, REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CARP AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION BY THE DAR PRIOR TO ANY LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE ACTIONS ON THE MATTER AND SUCH OTHER MATTERS HEREIN STATED."

WHEREAS, the demands of globalization on a primarily agricultural country like the Philippines necessitates the optimization of land use and productivity, as well as the development and promotion of downstream agri-business industries while remaining faithful to the ideals of the comprehensive agrarian reform program;

WHEREAS, these ideals of economic empowerment of agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) through equitable redistribution of land, as well as the development of support services and opportunities for industry diversification have not been achieved, with the lack of investment incentives for landowners and other businessmen typified by the undervaluation of CARP-covered lands and the protracted payment period of compensation to landowners, even those who have made voluntary offers to sell, and the non-provision of support services to ARBs;

WHEREAS, the lack of support services such as financing, irrigation, farm to market roads and technology transfer may be attributed to lack of funds owing to government's inability to collect amortizations and real-property taxes from the ARBs who are unable to realize profits from their land, chiefly due to the very lack of these support services;

WHEREAS, a joint study conducted by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) found that more than Php100 billion has already been spent for CARP; by 2003 Land Bank has advanced Php 4.6 billion for it; and from 1987 to 2004, the estimated collectibles from amortization payments was reported at Php 14.3 billion, but the actual amount collected was only Php 2.5 billion or 17.6%.

WHEREAS, there is a glaring absence of the direct coordination, participation and supervision of the local government units in the implementation of the CARP such that problems affecting the LGU become reactive rather than pro-active to include but not limited to peace and order, land taxation and the like;

WHEREAS, just and speedier compensation of landowners and the granting of incentives to agricultural and agri-business investors are inappropriately addressed;

WHEREAS, conflict resolutions amongst and between all stakeholders can best be attained through serious review and understanding of all issues, concerns and interests of all towards a progressive Agrarian Reform Initiative for Agricultural Economic Empowerment (AGRI-AGREE) and social justice;

WHEREAS, the need to unite the diverse interests of all CARP stakeholders must heed the call for a reformed agrarian initiative responsive to the realities of globalization.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to advocate and support for a comprehensive study, review and assessment of the CARP and its implementation by the DAR prior to any legislative and executive action on the matter.

RESOLVED, FURTHER to ensure the protection of the rights of all stakeholders as enshrined and guaranteed by the Constitution,

RESOLVED, LIKEWISE, to seek a moratorium in the implementation of contentious aspects of any CARP procedures as may be deemed necessary by mutual agreement of the implementing entities of government;

RESOLVED, LIKEWISE, to provide for provision of infrastructure, financial and appropriate support services to ensure the optimum use and productivity of the redistributed land and uplift the standard of living of ARBs;

RESOLVED, SIMILARLY, to recommend the direct participation and supervision of the local government units in the implementation of the CARP, including the proper identification and selection of ARBs, collection of taxes and amortizations, and maintenance of peace and order;

RESOLVED, SIMILARLY to call for just and speedier compensation of landowners and the granting of incentives to agricultural and agri-business investors;

RESOLVED, FURTHER, to advocate and move towards a progressive Agrarian Reform Initiative for Agricultural Economic Empowerment (AGRI-AGREE).

RESOLVED, FINALLY, to endorse strongly to the Philippine Business Conference of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry in plenary session this coming October 2007 that all CARP stakeholders must heed the call of "Unity in Diversity" move spearheaded by Her Excellency President GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO for a reformed agrarian initiative responsive to the realities of globalization.

CLAIMS

- CARP "succeeding" on the basis of the distribution of 3.72-M hectares of land to 4.02-M farmer-beneficiaries.
- The lives of farmer beneficiaries and their families are being uplifted and farm productivity is improving.
- CARP simply needs to be extended some more years to ensure its completion.

THE TRUTH

As Revealed In The April 2007

DAR-German Economic Cooperation (GTZ) Study

- Philippine Agriculture is in a "state of distress". The social and economic conditions in the rural communities are not any better that 10 years ago. Macro policies are biased against agriculture. The "agricultural trade balance" has had a clear deteriorating trend since the enactment of CARP with the country transformed from a net agricultural exporter into a net agricultural importer by mid-1980's.
- 34 years of agrarian reform "failed to significantly reduce rural poverty levels".
- DAR has concentrated mainly on land redistribution, without considering viability and support services.
- CARP implementation beset by misplaced priorities and misallocation of resources. 60% of total disbursement goes to salaries of a "bloated bureaucracy" as DAR has 15,000 officials and employees.
- 26% of FBs have sold their lands. In Nueva Ecija, 41% and in Laguna, as high as 53% selling and mortgaging their lands and 26% in Quezon and 35% in Iloilo. Surveys by the Center for Peasant Education and Services (CPES) in Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon showed 3 out of 5 holders of CLOAs or EPs have sold their right or mortgaged and then abandoned their properties without paying.
- Government allocated only about 50% of needed funds. Land Bank has to advance up to P4.5 billion way beyond its credit line from World Bank of only P1 billion.
- There is really no landowner resistance to CARP as Voluntary Offers of Sale (VOS) accounted for 120% accomplishment of DAR target while Voluntary Land Transfers (VLT) accounted for 180% accomplishment. As to total land area, VOS accounted for 30% while compulsory acquisition by DAR accounted for only 16%.
- There was lack of support services and credit. Technology and support services were needed to make FBs successful. No government loans available to FBs who had to borrow at interest rates of 24.7%. DAR admits that about 3 million FBs out of 4 million FBs did not receive any support services.
- The collection of amortization payments from CARP beneficiaries at a dismal 17.8% rate. As of 2005, estimated collectibles from FBs was P14.3 billion with actual amount collected was only P2.5 billion.

41% of CARP beneficiaries do not till land given to them

BACOLOD City – The Office of Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon revealed that 41 percent of the total of 111,752 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries or ARBs in Negros Occidental no longer till the land awarded to them through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program or CARP.

According to Atty. Jose Marie Valencia, the team tasked by Marañon to survey and make an actual inventory of lands given to farmer beneficiaries had already finished the first phase of their activity and discovered a very revealing information as to the status of the CARP implementation in the province.

Valencia said the first phase of the CARP inventory was to locate and identify the actual ARBs in the province based on the data given to them by the Provincial Agrarian Reform Office (PARO).

He said that the 25,336 ARBs representing 41 percent of the total ARBs that are not in possession of the land awarded to them anymore have either sold their rights to the land, leased them or returned them to their former employers or landlords.

The province will focus on the remaining 59 percent of the ARBs in its second phase of the inventory, which will determine if CARP helped in alleviating their status in life.

Valencia said, "We have noticed that farm workers who had made a joint venture with their employers are doing better compared to ARBs that started on their own."

Valencia added that they were able to discover that farms awarded to ARBs nearer to urban centers particularly in Bacolod City have the most number of beneficiaries that gave up their lands.

The chief of staff of Marañon is positive that they can finish the inventory in two weeks time this October and make a final evaluation of the impact of CARP in the province.

A copy of the evaluation will be given to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and members of Congress for their reference in deciding on whether to terminate CARP after it expires next year, or extend it.

Valencia added that the report will include listings of ARBs with multiple Certificates of Land Ownership Award or CLOAs, the problem of local governments in collecting real property taxes on lands awarded to ARBs, and the status with Land Bank of the Philippines on payments made by the ARBs for their amortization.

"We received reports that it is the national government that pays the amortization of beneficiaries and it is unfair because it is the taxpayers' money that is being used," Valencia said.

Source: Panay News October 2, 2007

In its latest issue, the Bahrain Tribune quoted Brigadier Tariq Mubarak Bin Daena, Bahrain's Deputy Chief of Public Security, as saying that 39 people, mostly expatriates, were arrested in shabu-related raids in the past six months. Ten of them were women.

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Megadike eyed in lahar-affected town

IROSIN, SORSOGON—GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS are considering a megadike to solve the recurring threat of lahar and mudflow that had ravaged at least five villages here.

The idea sprang from a conference of local officials, heads of concerned government agencies, and Rep. Jose Solis after an ocular inspection of the lahar-affected areas on Thursday.

Solis said the megadike was part of a master plan being drawn up by an interagency group, which would be submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo during her visit today to Legazpi City.

The plan will also contain such components as relocation sites, livelihood and other basic facilities for the affected residents, he said.

Solis, who chairs the newly created House committee on Bicol economic recovery and development, said funding for the master plan would be shouldered by the national government and the concerned local governments.

At least half-a-kilometer dike would be constructed in Barangay Cogon to redirect the water flow to its original channel.

Solis said Cogon residents would have to be relocated as recommended by the Office of Civil Defense, but they could choose to return when the danger of lahar and mudflow is reduced once the dike is built.

A similar project will be considered in the villages of Mapaso, Patag and Monbon, if found advantageous to the residents, he added.

The Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council, however, is not keen on the idea, saying it might just be an exercise in futility.

Ben Gabionsa, municipal engineer and MDCC coordinator, said the better option was to vacate part of Cogon and spend the money to be allocated for the dike to the improvement of a permanent relocation site.

Gabionsa said the local government unit had already purchased a three-hectare lot for the purpose.

As of now, at least 106 families—70 from Cogon and 36 from Sitio Bliss, Barangay Monbon—have to be transferred permanently.

The OCD favors the MDCC concept.

Gabionsa said he had already talked with the head of the Department of Public Works and Highways' Second Engineering District, and requested that future infrastructure plans in the affected areas be coordinated with the MDCC. **Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon**



MASSKARA FESTIVAL

Revelers in colorful masks start celebrating the 28th Masskara Festival, a month long merrymaking, dining and street dancing in Bacolod City. The event is said to be one of the country's best tourism events.

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Abu behind slay of Misuari liaison man, says cop exec

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ABU Sayyaf bandits were believed to be behind the killing of the liaison officer of jailed Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader Nur Misuari in Sulu last week. Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, police chief for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao,

said Abdurahman (not Jainal as earlier reported) Jamasali, was talking to his attackers when shot.

Goltiao said Jamasali's wounds in the face and hands "also indicated that he tried to cover his face."

Jamasali's driver, Wishar

Amo, was also killed.

Goltiao refused to identify the suspects pending pursuit operations.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Philippine Marine Corps commandant, said Misuari had repeatedly warned Jamasali not to go to Buanza because of

threats to his life.

Buanza is an MNLF stronghold, but both Dolorfino and Goltiao said some Abu Sayyaf members frequented the area. Jamasali had openly criticized the Abu Sayyaf for its terror and extortion acts. **Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao**

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Smuggled vehicles, clothes seized

By Jolene Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE Bureau of Customs in Cebu uncovered P7 million worth of smuggled vehicles and used clothing valued at P8 million in container vans coming from Korea.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales opened on Friday 10 vans and found 28 sports utility vehicles. Another van had 120,000 kilograms of used clothing.

Customs officials said each vehicle could be sold at P250,000 locally.

Morales said the used vehicles were consigned to Sollano Trading and the used clothing, to Budiac Marketing, both based in Cebu.

He ordered Cebu Customs to start forfeiture proceedings on the seized items.

Morales said the bureau might auction off the vehicles and turn over the clothing to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

District Collector Ricardo Belmonte said the Customs was intensifying its monitoring of all container vans.

Belmonte said the used clothing arrived on Sept. 22 on board MV Eagle Excellence and MV Uni Ample, and declared used household articles.

The vehicles arrived on Sept. 21 and were declared mechanical tools and accessories, customs officials said.

Morales ordered the immediate filing of criminal cases against the consignees.

NEWS BRIEFS

3 kids dead in grenade blast

ILIGAN CITY—Three children were killed while seven others were wounded when a grenade exploded in the hinterland village of Digkilaan here on Oct. 20.

SPO2 Mahatma Bajolo, duty officer at the Police Station 3, identified the fatalities as Mary Ann Baton, 15, Rosele Enlod, 4 and Dennis Daligdig, 11. Police arrested Wilfredo Tapnay, who allegedly lobbed the grenade at a group led by Francis Baton. Tapnay told the INQUIRER that he owned the grenade. **Richel V. Umel, Inquirer Mindanao**

Army soldier dies defending passengers

LUCENA CITY—An Army sergeant died on Thursday while trying to defend passengers of a Bicol-bound bus from a group of robbers.

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang of the Army's Southern Luzon Command said SSGT. Pedro Caraga, who was assigned to the Solcom adjutant office, was on board a Raymond bus traveling along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Bobito, Lopez, Quezon when three armed men posing as passengers declared a holdup.

The soldier immediately drew his .45 cal. service firearm to protect the passengers. But one of the robbers who was sitting behind Caraga shot him several times in different parts of the body. The soldier died on the spot. The robbers quickly escaped after the shooting.

Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Obaniana, Solcom chief, hailed the heroism of the victim. "He exhibited courage despite being outnumbered and his gallantry foiled what could have been a successful robbery," Obaniana said in a statement. **Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon**

Alleged gunman in solon's slay nabbed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) arrested one of the alleged gunmen of slain Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. in a raid on his safehouse at the boundary of Antipolo City and Baras, Rizal, on Oct. 20.

CIDG-Calabarzon chief Senior Supt. Mark Edison Belarma said Sonny Taculao, 41, of Makati City, was identified as one of at least three men who shot Bersamin shortly after he attended the wedding of his niece at Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on Dec. 16, 2006.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Nagcarlan holds Kalang-Kalang fest

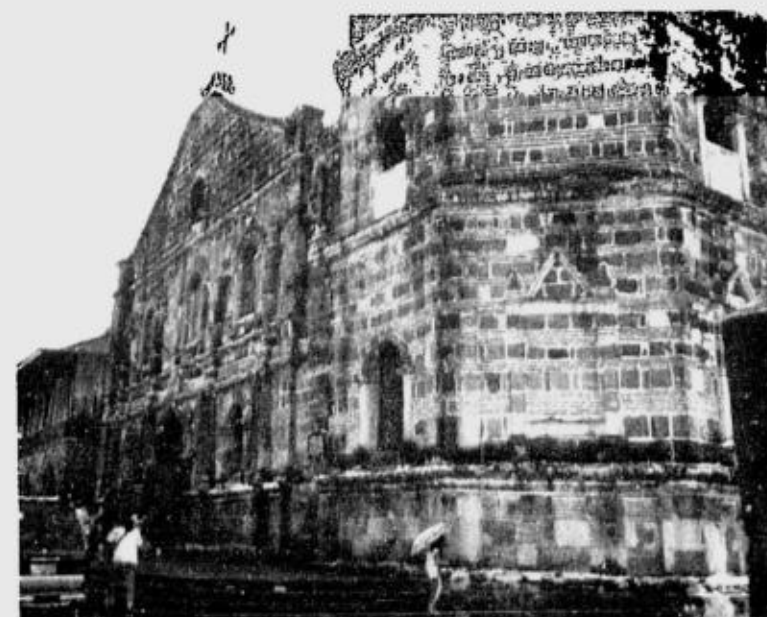
SAN PABLO CITY—The centuries-old municipality of Nagcarlan in Laguna is preparing for its celebration of the 20th Kalang-Kalang Festival on Oct. 24-28.

Nagcarlan Mayor Alejandro C. Malabag said the festival was named Kalang-Kalang to symbolize the town's bountiful harvests of agro-industrial products.

The festival is a five-day celebration showcasing the products. The town, which has 52 barangays, produces vegetables, which account for 80 percent of its products and from which most of its revenues come.

Activities lined up include exhibits, agricultural product sales and contest of the best among local farm produce.

Romulo O. Ponte, Inquirer Southern Luzon



NAGCARLAN CHURCH

DepEd execs question COA report on textbooks

PALO, LEYTE—A GOVERNMENT audit finding that textbooks worth P27.7 million were rotting in the stock rooms of school divisions in Eastern Visayas has placed education regional officials in a state of disbelief.

The books are old and no longer conform with current school curriculums, and they contain errors, Sol Matugas, regional director of the Department of Education, said in a press conference on Oct. 17.

For these reasons, they are kept in the stock rooms of the different school divisions, said Matugas as she criticized the Commission on Audit report as inaccurate and unfair.

"We cannot just dispose of these books say by burning. We can use these old books under our community literacy service," she said.

The COA in Eastern Visayas reported after an inventory last year that the DepEd did not distribute the books for elementary and secondary levels, valued at P27.7 million, to the schools and students.

Lawyer Perlita Lim, COA regional cluster chief, said the value of the unused books was based on reports of the agency's field officers who conducted the inventory some time last year.

"And these unutilized books are supposed to be used by our elementary and secondary students," Lim said during the same press conference.

"Almost all the (nine) divisions under DepEd-8 were discovered to have the same problem," she added.

Luisa Yu, regional president of the Association of District Supervisors and district superintendent of Biliran, said some teachers had been reluctant to distribute the books because they would have to pay for lost ones.

Ronelo Fermo, schools division superintendent of Tacloban City, admitted that thousands of books costing around P2 million were not given to students of the Leyte National High School, the biggest secondary school in the region with a population of more than

7,000, and the San Jose and Sagkahan public elementary schools.

These books were "defec-

tive," Fermo said.

Yu said the old books were sent to the region from the DepEd head office in Manila

in the 1980s.

Matugas noted that the estimated value of the unused books was too high, consider-

ing that majority of them were printed decades ago.

Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

4,000 cops to be deployed for Eastern Visayas polls

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE will deploy about 4,000 policemen in Eastern Visayas for the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections next week.

The assignment of these lawmen, especially to "areas of concern," will help ensure the peaceful and orderly conduct of elections in the region, police regional director Chief Supt. Abner Cabalquinto said on Wednesday.

Police have identified 528 of the 4,391 barangays in Eastern Visayas as areas of concern.

Cabalquinto said most of the policemen would come from the regional police headquarters based at Camp Ruperto Kangleon in Palo, Leyte.

Iloilo

In Iloilo City, few youths filed their certificates of candidacy (COCs) for the SK council amid calls for abolition of the youth federation.

Jonathan Sayno, city election assistant, said about 200 candidates filed their COCs for SK chair and another 300 for the SK council in 180 barangays.

Sayno said candidates were running unopposed in many of the barangays.

Many of those who registered for the SK polls were discouraged from running because of the costs of filing the COCs, including having them notarized, amounting to around P100, plus P250 for drug testing.

But Sayno noted a high turnout of candidates for the barangay elections.

Candidates flocked to the Comelec office to beat the deadline at midnight on Oct. 19. The office was jam-packed, especially between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m., on Thursday.

At least 2,000 candidates for the barangay councils and another 500 for barangay captain filed their certificates.

In Maribojoc, Bohol, 561 candidates for barangay and SK elections signed a covenant on Oct. 19 vowing not to give money during the Oct. 29 elections.

The covenant signing was witnessed by officials led by Mayor Leoncio Evasco and the town's parish priest, Efrén Dolauta.

It was "a small step toward realizing a dream of a fair, clean and honest elections," Evasco said.

The candidates also agreed to police their ranks and report anyone who would try to buy votes.

Vote buying

"You will be the ones to enforce this pact," said Evasco as he urged the candidates to gather evidence of vote buying.

He said the municipal government would help prosecute those who would refuse to abide by the agreement.

Synchronized barangay assemblies will be held today in the town. Teams of councilors for seven clustered barangays will inform voters that their candidates have agreed not to buy votes.

The teams will be monitoring the campaign and Election Day itself in Maribojoc's 22 barangays.

Barangays considered election hot spots will also be closely monitored by the municipal government, Evasco said.

Gov. Erico Aumentado on Friday declared that Bohol leaders had agreed to stay neutral during the campaign period.

In his weekly radio program, Aumentado said he had a pact with the three Bohol congressmen and the chapter president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, Jagna Mayor Exuperio Lloren, that the barangay and SK polls should remain nonpartisan.

The governor directed town mayors to distance themselves from the candidates.

Pangasinan

In Pangasinan, a village official and a candidate for council member in an upland village in Bolinao town were shot and wounded by a group of men on Friday night.

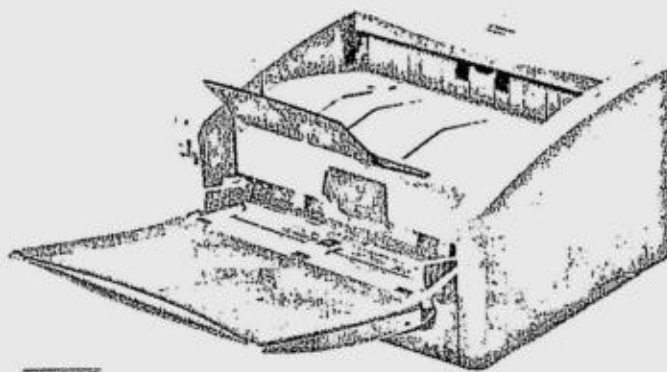
Fely Anama, 59, a barangay councilor in Samang Sur, and Freddie Ariola, 48, a candidate for council member, were traveling on a dirt road in their village aboard a motorcycle at about 8:30 p.m. when they were fired at.

Anama was hit in the right foot while Ariola was hit in the left hand. *Joey A. Gabieta and Nestor R. Burgos Jr. and Kit Bagaipo, Inquirer Visayas; Gabriel Cardinosa, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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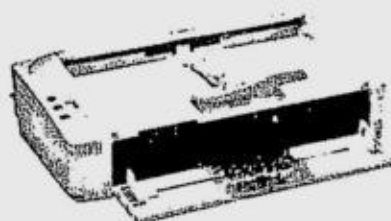


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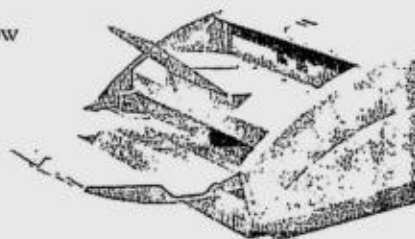
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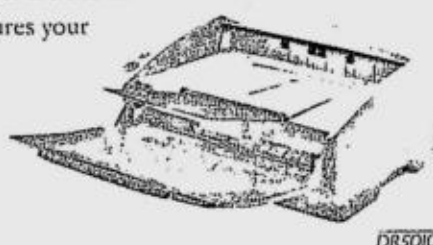
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Late SPORTS

Magnolia nips SLR, ties for top spot

By Musong R. Castillo

AFTER BEING KNOCKED DOWN BY A WAYWARD ELBOW, Magnolia's Dondon Hontiveros did what he does best and knocked out Sta. Lucia in the stretch.

Hontiveros canned two crucial jumpers inside the final 66 seconds last night to lift Magnolia to a come-from-behind 101-96 victory over the Realtors at the Araneta Coliseum.

In the second game, the Air21 Express nosed out the Alaska Aces in overtime, 102-101, after the two squads had battled to a 92-92 standoff in regulation time.

The Express improved their record to 1-1 while the Aces kept the Realtors company in the cellar with 0-2 cards.

The 6-foot-3 Cebu-born Hontiveros made all his five shots in the fourth period, including two triples that kept Magnolia in the game, before hitting the key baskets that secured a 2-0 start for the Beverage Masters and a tie for the lead with Purefoods.

Decked by Dennis Espino with an elbow to the kisser with just 79 seconds left and the Realtors clinging to a 96-95 lead,

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Welcoat vs
Red Bull
7:20 p.m.—Talk 'N
Text vs Barangay
Ginebra

Hontiveros said he found no extra motivation from the incident.

"I just felt at the start of the fourth quarter that I had my rhythm going."

The loss, the second in as many games for the Realtors, again highlighted their inability to finish off their foes. They also sputtered in the second half of a 95-86 loss to Purefoods where they led by as many as 16 points in the third.

And they were going great guns until Marlou Aquino was pulled out in the middle of the fourth quarter.

Aquino finished with 19 points on 7-of-11 shooting from the field. But he was benched at the most crucial time — with the Realtors leading, 87-81 with 6:50 left — and was not sent back the rest of the way.

Joseph Yeo, acquired in a trade with Coca-Cola, led the Realtors with a career-high 24 points, while Espino, despite missing eight of 10 free throws, wound

up with 12 markers.

Magnolia had six players in twin digits with Danny Seigle, who shoved the Beverage Masters to that one-point deficit with a floating jumper in the middle of the shaded lane, matching Hontiveros' 18.

Hontiveros also had a night-high eight assists, while Seigle a game-best 13 rebounds.

Meanwhile, officer-in-charge Renauld Barrios has invited Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao to a conference today to explain why he charged at technical chief Perry Martinez after losing to Barangay Ginebra last Friday.

The scores:

First Game

MAGNOLIA 101—Hontiveros 18, Seigle 18, Tugade 16, Racela 14, E. Villanueva 13, Ildelfonso 12, Tenorio 4, Erman 2, Fonacier 2, Gonzales 2, J. Villanueva 0.

STA. LUCIA 96—Yeo 24, Aquino 19, Espino 12, Williams 9, Miranda 9, Mendoza 9, Gonzales 5, Reyes 4, Omolon 3, Daa 2, Coronel 0.

Quarters: 28-25, 48-46, 76-71, 101-96

Second Game

AIR21 102—Santos 19, De Ocampo 19, Se 17, Chia 14, Dimaunahan 7, Arboleda 6, Kramer 5, Canaleta 5, Cruz 4, Sotto 4, Intal 2, Baluyot 0.

ALASKA 101—Miller 33, Carliso 20, Thoss 13, Cortez 11, Ferriols 10, Laure 6, Quinahan 4, Bono 2, Hugnatan 2, Dela Cruz 0.

Quarters: 23-22, 43-38, 65-64, 92-all, 102-101



STA. LUCIA's Dennis Espino (middle) is harassed by Magnolia's Rico Villanueva (top) and Olcen Racela in last night's game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

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12th Unigames comes off the wraps in Sugarlandia

By Cedelf P. Tupas, Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—WITH THE COUNTRY'S major university sports leagues taking a respite, action shifts to this city as the 12th Philippine University Games unfolds today at the University of St. La Salle Coliseum.

About 2,000 athletes representing 54 universities and colleges are seeing action, making this year's edition the biggest ever, Unigames president Roger Banzuela said.

Leading the roster are UAAP powerhouse Far Eastern University, winner of five team crowns last year, De La Salle University, College of St. Benilde, University of Santo Tomas, San Beda College and USLS.

Except for the women's volleyball title, FEU will be back to defend its crown in

men's volleyball, men's badminton, men's table tennis and women's athletics.

The Archers claimed a record eighth straight title in women's football last year, following victories in women's swimming and women's chess.

In the absence of 2006 champion Emilio Aguinaldo College, FEU is also one of the fancied teams in men's basketball, along with Ateneo, which is fielding the core of the team that fell one game short of the UAAP finals.

Beach volleyball will debut in the week-long games, where lawn tennis and taekwondo, have also been calendared.

Romulo Neri, chairman of the Commission on Higher Education, and Philippine Sports Commission chairman William Ramirez are expected to grace the 6 p.m. opening program.

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Hourlong blaze hits Glorietta 4 restaurant

Fire not related to Friday's blast, police say

By DJ Yap

FOR THE SECOND TIME IN A week, the owners of the Glorietta mall in Makati City shut its gates and evacuated customers after a small fire broke out in the kitchen of a seafood restaurant on the second floor of Glorietta 4. Fortunately, no one was reported hurt.

In the wake of the huge blast at Glorietta 2 last Friday that left 11 dead and more than 100 wounded, a blaze, believed to have been caused by faulty electrical wiring, hit the Seafood Seafood Market at a little past noon yesterday.

But fire officials were quick to dispel the notion that the fire could be connected to the explosion, saying it was an "isolated case," and a mere coincidence that it occurred in the same shopping complex.

Patrons reported seeing smoke coming from the establishment, as security personnel began directing customers and patrons to the exits. Fire trucks responded to the scene in a matter of minutes and put the fire out in about an hour.

Makati Fire Marshall Jose Embang said a short circuit may have triggered the fire that began in the kitchen at 12:02 p.m. It was placed under control at 1:02 p.m., he said.

Five other shops were also affected by the incident, said Ayala Land spokesperson Alfonso Reyes.

A police official said they were treating the fire as an "isolated incident." "This has nothing to do or has no connection to Friday's blast," said Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman, Southern Police District director.

Lim to mall owners: Step up security

By Allison W. Lopez

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM YESTERDAY appealed to mall owners to step up their security measures by providing additional personnel or equipment to ensure the safety of their customers.

Lim made his appeal following Friday's explosion at the Glorietta 2 mall in Makati City, which has so far claimed 11 lives and injured dozens others.

He stressed that the security of their customers should remain the top priority of owners of malls and other establishments often frequented by the public.

The mayor also called on the Manila Police District to increase police visibility in the city's vital installations and in areas where many people converge such as parks and churches. Lim likewise ordered city officials to coordinate with the administration of mass transport systems such as the Light Rail Transit and the Metro Rail Transit on improving security.

At the same time, he asked the public to be more aware of their surroundings and to immediately report any suspicious persons or activities in the vicinity.

Lim added that parents should keep their children in plain sight at all times whenever they go out.

"Those going to the churches, public markets and plazas must be doubly alert and be careful every step of the way," he said.

Reyes said it was unfortunate that Glorietta was hit by a fire so soon after the blast, but he insisted that the two incidents were not even remotely connected.

He added that structural engineers had given Glorietta 1, 3 and 4, which all opened shop beginning Saturday, the green light to begin operations.

An estimate as to the damage was not immediately available. Reyes said Glorietta 3 would likely reopen yesterday afternoon, while Glorietta 1 and 4, whose electrical wirings are interconnected, would resume operations today. *With Julie M. Aurelio*



SHOPPERS (above) leave the Glorietta 4 after a fire broke out at the Seafood Seafood Market restaurant (left) located on the mall's second floor. No one was reported hurt in the incident which forced the mall to close down for several hours yesterday.

ERIK ARAZAS



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DID YOU KNOW

THE LAND in Manila where España Boulevard is located was donated by Antonio de la Riva, owner of Suluan Estate Corp. In exchange, De la Riva asked that the boulevard be named after the European country.

The Manila City Council tried to change the name of the national road in the 1950s, but De la Riva's heirs reminded the officials of the condition accompanying the donation.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY AND 'PRO-JUNK'

Interior designer makes old things new again

By DJ Yap

WHENEVER SHE WALKS INTO a room that she has designed, Wilhelmina Garcia is never without a story or two to tell about the place—from the furniture and art pieces to their many little details.

She may tell you an anecdote about how a dining table was carved out of a big *ipil* tree that was felled by last year's Typhoon "Milenyo" in her farmhouse backyard in Biñan, Laguna. "It would be a pity to just burn it to make charcoal," she will say.

Or she may share with you a tale on how she came up with the idea of wrapping the springs from her client's old couch around light bulbs placed inside blue wine bottles—and that the bottles were a gift from her *suki* thrift shop owner.

Or, as you admire the bare el-

egance of a bamboo-lined cabinet, she will recount how its asymmetrical handles were once part of a dear friend's desk drawer.

For Garcia, using old, secondhand, or discarded pieces and transforming them into something new, or something else, is what distinguishes her from her more traditional colleagues.

In many ways, she too believes that this, among other things, is what makes her work special.

"Using recycled or junk materials give character to my design," Garcia told the

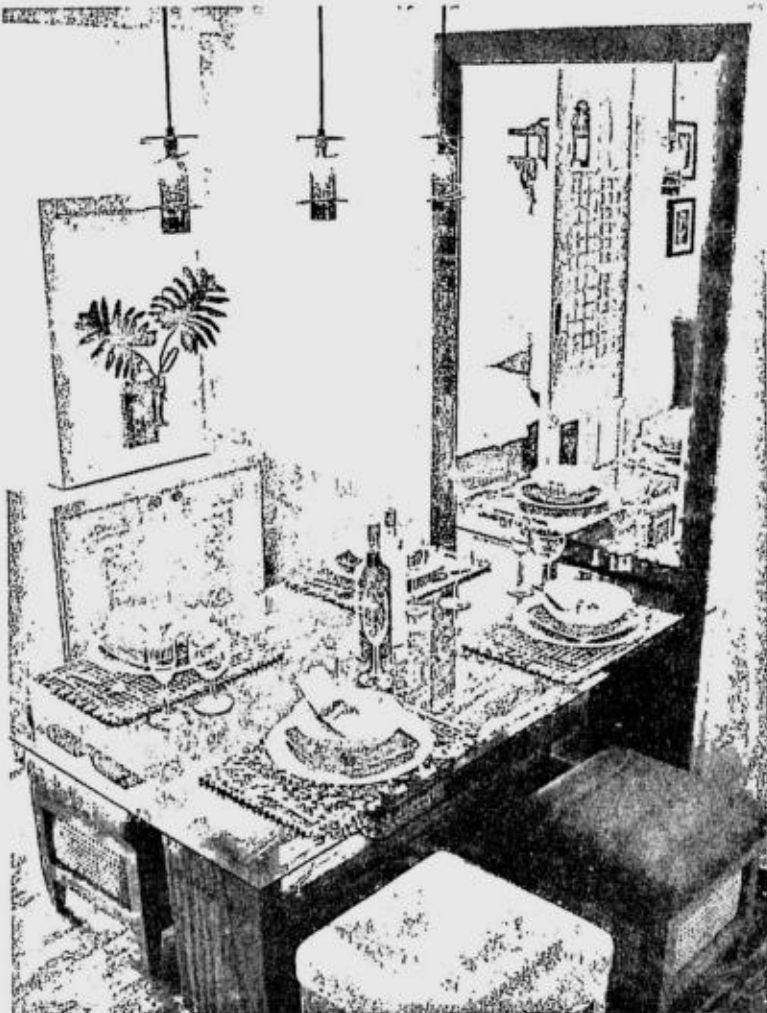
INQUIRER.

In fact, the 27-year-old interior designer has made it a point to use secondhand and recycled materials in her work, unless otherwise instructed by her clients.

Her design, "Living within nature's confines," recently won the grand prize in the interior design category of Metrobank's Art and Design Excellence National Competition.

For that contest, she transformed an unfurnished 33-sq m single bedroom unit at the Oriental Gardens condominium in Makati City into a lush yet livable flat decorated with indigenous materials in warm Earth colors.

"The design is an interesting mix of old/new details: A *capiz* window turned into a sliding partition, sofa springs used as dining lights and suspended from an old closet door, balusters that hold a lamp, and draw-



THE DINING area is illuminated by light bulbs placed in wine bottles which are encased in couch springs.

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

er faces refashioned as handles and shelves," according to Metrobank's primer on the competition.

"Reuse continues in old kitchen cabinet doors, tiles, almarion and newspaper—all these readily available from backyards, thrift shops and markets," it continued. "Garcia's design proves that creativity can create an environment that is friendly to the environment."

Garcia said the use of indigenous materials has always been a theme in her designs even as an interior design student at St. Scholastica's College in Manila. "Nature has always been my interest. I love going nature-tripping with my friends. Somehow, this love for the environment has influenced my work," she said.

But strictly speaking, Garcia does not consider herself an environmentalist, and reserves

that label for her sister, who is connected with the Polillo Island Biodiversity Conservatory Foundation Inc.

"I haven't really taken part in protests, though I sometimes join my sister's advocacies," she said.

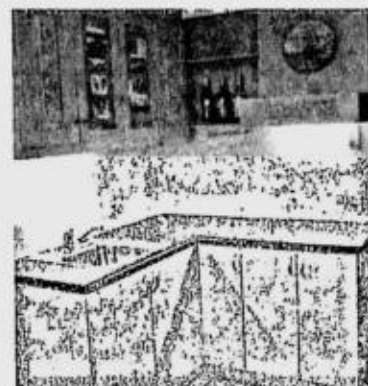
Growing up in a farm in her hometown in Biñan with 12 brothers and sisters may have set off the spark to her nature-loving sensibilities, she said.

"In a farm, nothing is wasted. You have a use for everything. So I don't like to see old materials go to waste," she added.

Garcia considers her designs as part of the "junk art" movement, but she said the label is misleading. Using junk does not mean the design is junk, too, she pointed out.

Though some of her clients—she works freelance—prefer new materials, others appreciate her penchant for making use of old items, usually from the customers' own used stuff, she said.

"It's really sad when the

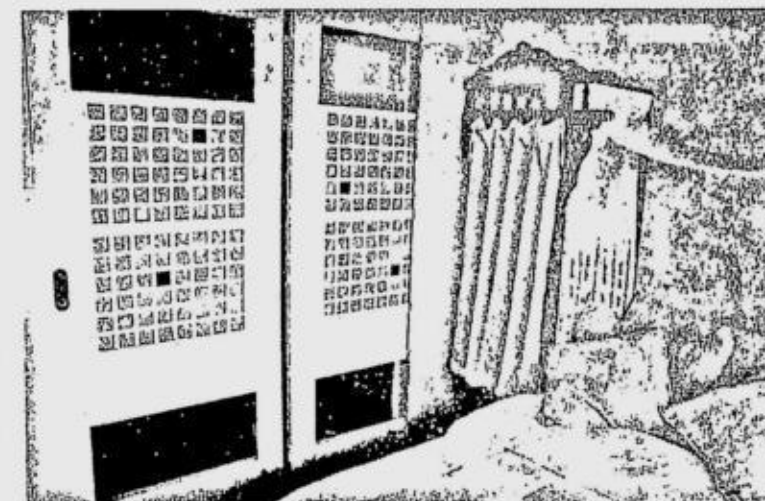


RECYCLED materials brighten up the kitchen.

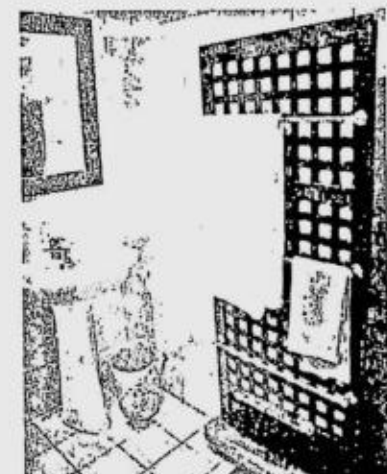
client wants to discard their old stuff," Garcia said. Sometimes, she brings some of these old items home for other projects in the future.

Perhaps the greatest reason she prefers secondhand pieces to store-bought ones is the wealth of memories behind them, she said.

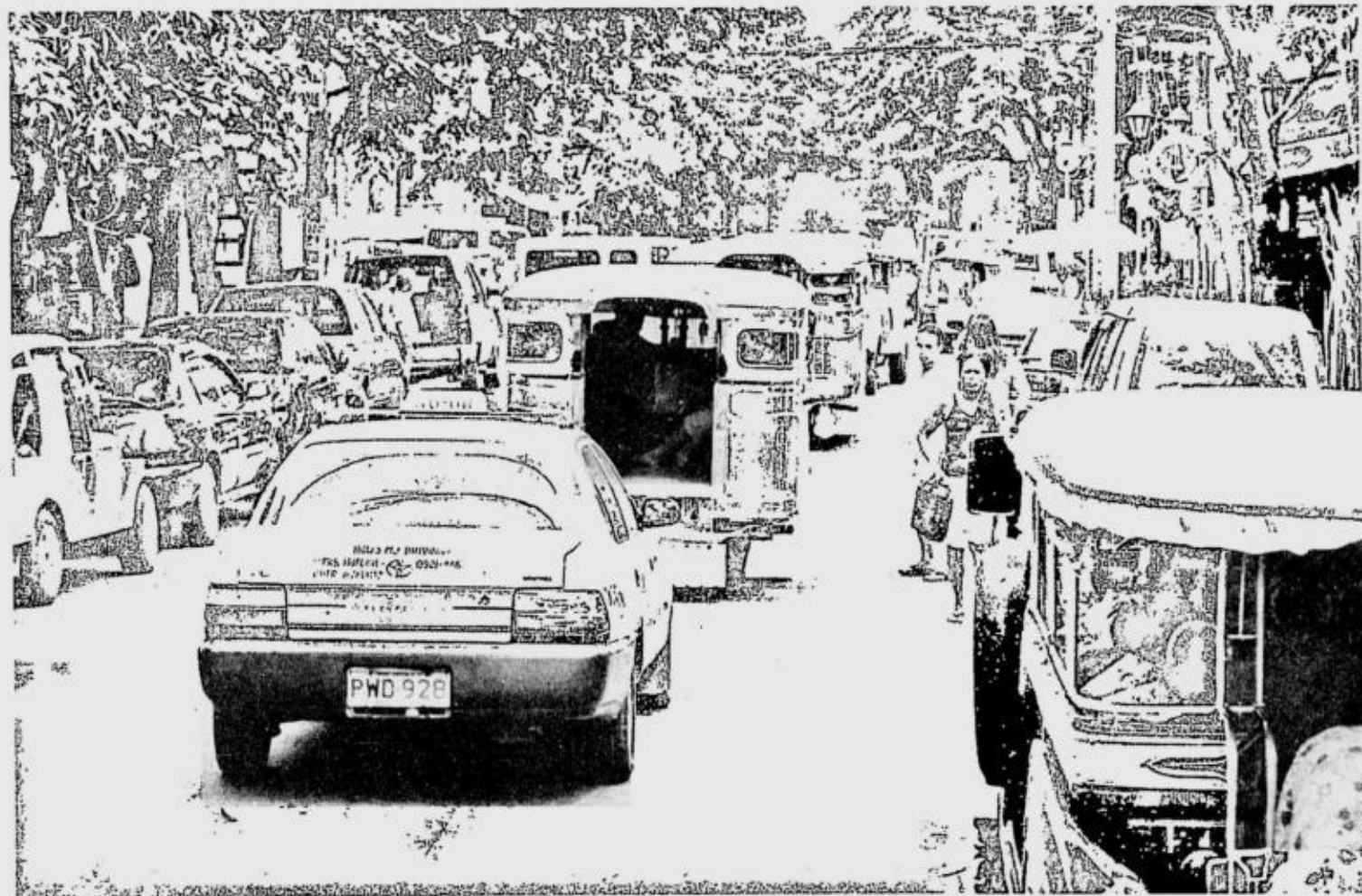
"When I walk into the room, there's a story to tell about everything that's there. There's always something to talk about," Garcia said.



AN "ALMARIO" or pillow rack becomes a mini closet while *capiz* windows are converted into sliding doors that open into the bedroom.



AN OLD *capiz* window is turned into a towel rack.



FLOWER POWER

Jiggs, 31, of Manila writes: "Flower shop owners who do business in what is commonly called the 'Dangwa' area in Sampaloc, Manila, have encroached on the sidewalks. Their customers park their cars on Laon-Laan and Dimasalang Streets causing traffic in the area, especially during rush hour every day. Worse, parking attendants and traffic bureau personnel don't do anything to ease the problem. Mayor Lim, help!"



Metro
Citizen's call
0918-8985566

Illegal dumping at Proj. 2

SOMEONE from our barangay trimmed a big tree nearby and left all the cut branches and leaves in front of our house. Other people followed suit and have started dumping garbage on the same site. Apart from this, the busted streetlights have not been replaced so that at nighttime, teenagers have been encouraged to engage in amorous activities in what has now been transformed into a lovers' haven at night. Please help before something worse happens. A crime could be commit-

ted anytime! Thanks a lot for your attention.

TENG DIVINO, 47,
Kaimito Street, Project 2, Quezon City

Caloocan streets full of potholes, says motorist

CALLING the attention of Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri. Cadena de Amor and Bautista Streets inside Maligaya Park are full of potholes and badly need repair work. How long shall we wait for action on this everyday travail for motorists?

RENE JAVELLANA, 47, Camarin, Caloocan City

Fixers at NSO?

THERE are many fixers outside the National Statistics Office at the corner of Edsa and

Quezon Boulevard. They can produce an "authenticated" copy of a birth certificate for those who are in a hurry to get these documents. Their usual victims are people who are frustrated by the slow authentication processing in the office. These fixers claim they have contacts inside the NSO.

ED LIZARAN, 54, Cainta

Tricycles, PUVs without tail lights on Commonwealth

GRABE na po ang mga tricycle at PUV drivers on Commonwealth Avenue and Batasan Road. Halos 70% ng mga sasakyan nila walang tail lights! (About 70% of tricycles and PUVs plying Commonwealth Avenue and Batasan Road have no tail lights)

JOJO, 44, San Mateo, Rizal

Man hangs self following fight with wife over drinking

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

VANEZA MUÑOZ WALKED OUT on Jonard, her husband, yesterday morning after a fight with him, hoping to cool down.

But when she returned several hours later to their house on Anakbayan Kundiman Street, Barangay Paltok, Quezon City, she found him hanging from a wooden beam.

According to Vaneza, she last saw her husband at around 1:30 a.m. yesterday after he came home from a drinking session with his friends.

Case investigator PO2 Joseph Madrid of the Quezon City Police District said Vaneza told him she and her husband had

an argument over his drinking.

She added that she later decided to leave their house to clear her head.

Several hours later, Vaneza said she came home, hoping to reconcile with her husband. Instead, she discovered Jonard's body hanging from a beam inside their house.

An electrical cord was tied around his neck, police records showed.

Vaneza said she immediately sought help from their neighbors who brought Jonard to the St. Agnes General Hospital.

The victim, however, was pronounced dead on arrival at 5:05 a.m. by the attending physician, Dr. Philip Nakpal.

QC road open in time for holiday season

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

COMMUTERS PASSING THROUGH Visayas and Mindanao Avenues in Quezon City can look forward to a faster trip with the concreting of the Congressional Avenue Extension expected to be completed before the holidays.

The city government will soon release P58.6 million as compensation to the over 100 homeowners affected by the road project. The amount will be reimbursed by the Department of Public Works and Highways once funding becomes available.

Of the total, P11.9 million will go to homeowners on a por-

tion of Visayas Avenue to Luzon Avenue while the remainder will go to payments for lot parcels from Visayas Avenue to Tangang Sora Avenue.

The 10-km road extension project is expected to be operational before the Christmas season. It is expected to significantly decongest traffic on Commonwealth Avenue and Elliptical road, city officials said.

The DPWH, meanwhile, urged affected property owners to submit a certified true copy of transfer, certificate title, certified true copy of tax declaration and tax clearance to facilitate the release of payment for their property.

NBI agents seize 18 computers with fake software in Pasig

By Allison W. Lopez

MORE THAN P5 MILLION worth of computers which were using pirated software have been seized by agents of the National Bureau of Investi-

gation in Pasig City.

NBI-National Capital Region Director Edward Villarta said 18 computers with unauthorized versions of Autocad Software were confiscated in a recent raid on International Inc., a

company which holds office at the Belvedere Building on San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center.

Villarta said legal representatives of Autodesk Inc., a United States software producer, filed a complaint at their office on the

proliferation of fake versions of their client's program, Autocad.

After conducting surveillance operations based on intelligence reports that an Ortigas-based company was using unauthorized copies of the soft-

ware, the NBI-NCR acquired a search warrant from Judge Reynaldo Ros of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 33.

The seized computers where the fake Autocad software were installed have an estimated val-

ue of about P5.5 million, said Villarta.

The company owners will be charged for violation of Republic Act No. 8293 (Intellectual Property Rights Code of the Philippines), he added.

Junta lifts curfew, but fear still stalks Burma



A BURMA activist holds a picture of Aung San Suu Kyi while protesting in front of the Burma Embassy in Bangkok on Oct. 21. AP

RANGOON—RESIDENTS IN RANGOON (Yangon) on Sunday welcomed the end of a curfew imposed on the eve of bloody crackdown on peaceful protests in Burma (Myanmar), but again voiced fears in private over the country's iron-fisted junta.

The government ended the curfew Saturday in Rangoon, Burma's main city, where authorities violently put down prodemocracy protests, led by Buddhist monks, in late September, killing at least 13 people and jailing about 3,000.

Residents in Rangoon said they were relieved to see the end of the nightly curfew, which lasted from 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m., but confided that they did not yet feel that life had returned to normal.

"People are very happy about the end of the curfew. We are free now," said one company official in his 30s, who declined to be named.

"But people, including myself, con-

tinue to worry about the situation because of what happened in Rangoon last month," he said.

The end of the curfew came as military-run Burma was put under more international pressure over the deadly clampdown on dissent, with the United States Friday stepping up sanctions against the top generals including junta leader Gen. Than Shwe.

Burma, under military rule since 1962, tolerates little public dissent, but antijunta rallies began in August following a massive hike in fuel prices and snowballed into the biggest challenge to the regime in nearly two decades.

A 55-year-old housewife said she was glad that the government lifted the curfew, but added she would stay away from Rangoon's golden Shwedagon Pagoda, a rallying point for protesters.

"I would like to go to Shwedagon

Pagoda, but dare not go there right now. I am too afraid," she said.

While authorities have sharply reduced the security presence around the pagoda, Burma's most important landmark, several plain-clothes officials were still standing guard on Sunday.

A 41-year-old mother of a teenage boy said she continued to fret about security despite the end of the curfew.

"My son is very happy because he can go out with his friends at night. But I am worried about the security situation. I asked my son not to stay outside too long," she said.

During the curfew shops closed early and Rangoon's streets, normally bustling with people hanging out at tea shops late into the night, were eerily quiet.

One tea shop owner said he hoped more customers would return after the end of the curfew.

"My business suffered during the

curfew because I had to close my shop around 9:00 p.m., and most of all, we had very few customers," said the owner in his 50s.

Street tea shops are very popular for nights out among people in Burma, one of the world's poorest nations, where few people can afford to go to restaurants.

"I hope customers will return to my shop soon. I want my business to return to normal again," he said.

Apart from the curfew, the junta also imposed a ban on the Internet in a bid to curb the flow of images and information on the deadly crackdown being spread around the world.

Internet access was restored only recently, but the military government continued to ban foreign media, including the BBC and Voice of America, as well as news outlets run by exiled dissidents. AFP

Genetic factor in AIDS progression seen critical

PARIS—VARIATIONS IN TWO key genes help determine how swiftly an individual infected with HIV progresses to AIDS, according to a study published on Sunday in the journal Nature Immunology.

The finding challenges quarter-century-old wisdom that what chiefly drives the advance to AIDS is "viral load," the amount of HIV in the blood, whose relentless rise bludgeons the immune system, the researchers say.

Instead, they argue, the situation is more complex.

An individual's genetic profile can greatly affect replication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as well as the body's response to the intruder.

The interaction between the virus and the immune system switches "an otherwise benign infection to a lethal one," they say.

The genes in question are called CCR5 and CCL3L1, although other genes, still not fully

explored, may also play a part.

CCR5 controls a key receptor, or docking point, on the surface of the CD4 immune cell onto which HIV latches.

CCL3L1, meanwhile, controls an immune system signaling molecule called a chemokine that prevents the virus attaching itself to the CCR5 receptor.

Previous work has already established that certain genetic variants in CCR5 appear to give a shield against viral entry.

In 2005, the same team that reports on Sunday, led by Sunil Ahuja of the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, found that the number of copies of the CCL3L1 genes is also a factor.

People with extra copies of this gene—the number of copies varies according to the individual from zero to five and more—are less likely to become infected by HIV. AFP

Iran: No change in nuclear line after Larijani

TEHRAN—IRAN SUNDAY INSISTED ITS policy in the nuclear crisis with the West would not change after the sudden resignation of chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, amid fears it would take an even tougher line.

Larijani, who was seen as having a moderating influence on nuclear policy, stepped down following a prolonged disagreement

with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over the handling of Iran's position.

His successor is deputy foreign minister Saeed Jalili, a close confidant of the president, who is expected to implement Ahmadinejad's hardline stance on the nuclear issue in his new job.

The top nuclear negotiator—whose offi-

cial title is secretary of the Supreme National Security Council—has the job of leading talks with the European Union and UN nuclear watchdog on Iran's nuclear case.

But foreign ministry spokesperson Mohammad Ali Hosseini insisted on Sunday the change in personnel did not herald any switch in policy. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Syria closes last exit for fleeing Iraqis

DAMASCUS, Syria—Long the only welcoming country in the region for Iraqi refugees, Syria has closed its borders to all but a small group of Iraqis and imposed new visa rules that will legally require the 1.5 million Iraqis currently in Syria to return to Iraq. The change quietly went into effect Oct. 1. Syrian officials have often threatened to stem the flow of refugees over the last eight months, but until now have backed down after pleas from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. For more than a year, 2,000 to 4,000 Iraqis have fled into Syria every day, according to UN officials. On the last four days that the border remained open, the officials said, 25,000 Iraqis crossed into Syria. "The door is now closed to Iraqis in every direction," said Sybella Wilkes, a spokesperson here for the UN refugee agency. NYT

Poland voters to pass judgment on Kaczynski

WARSAW, Poland—Poles were voting Sunday in elections that will pass judgment on Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski's assertive approach to the European Union and controversial efforts to purge former communists from public life. Complete returns are not expected until Monday or Tuesday in the contest between Kaczynski and probusiness challenger Donald Tusk, who wants lower taxes and less confrontation with the European Union. Kaczynski's socially conservative Law and Justice Party had pushed for the election two years into a four-year term after the collapse of a shaky coalition with a right-wing Catholic party and farm-based populists. AP



KACZYNSKI AFP

Rightists seen winning big in Swiss vote

ZURICH—The right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) is set to consolidate its position as the alpine nation's most popular grouping in a parliamentary election on Sunday (Monday in Manila), outstripping its rivals after a provocative campaign. An opinion poll says the People's Party is expected to win 27.3 percent of the vote, a slight increase over 2003 when they raced to the top of the polls amid accusations of xenophobia. The SVP has again run a controversial campaign calling for the extradition of foreigners who commit serious crimes. Reuters

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SAMSUNG

12
YEARS

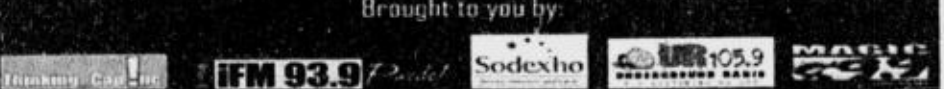
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Department of Budget and Management
PROCUREMENT SERVICE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS) Regional Inter-Agency Bids and Awards Committee Region V** invites Regular Cooperatives to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items.

Item/Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)	End User
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/Opening of Bids		
3,842 sets Elementary Tables and Chairs	P 7,685,366.00	Nov. 5, 2007 2:00 PM	Nov. 16, 2007 9:00 AM	P 3,000.00	DepEd Region V
5,296 pieces Elementary Armchairs	P 4,131,360.00			P 3,000.00	DepEd Region V

THIS BIDDING SHALL BE LIMITED TO REGULAR COOPERATIVES DULY REGISTERED WITH THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA), WITH CERTIFICATE OF GOOD STANDING AND WITH PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS IN REGION V.

The Bid documents shall be available at the **DBM Regional Office V** starting **October 22, 2007** upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at the **DBM Regional Office No. V, DBM Conference Room, Regional Center Site, Rawis, Legazpi City.**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the R-IABAC Secretariat at DBM Regional Office at telephone no. **4820173**.

PS-RIABAC reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **REBECCA B. OLAYON**
Chairperson, R-IABAC

(PDI - Oct. 22, 2007)

Toddlers killed in US air strikes in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—US AIR STRIKES IN A SHI'ITE stronghold of Baghdad on Sunday killed at least two toddlers, Reuters television footage showed.

Police said a total of 13 people were killed in the strikes and more than 50 were wounded.

In the morgue of Imam Ali hospital in the district of Sadr city the bodies of two toddlers, one wearing a nappy, lay on blankets while doctors tended to wounded men and boys, the video footage showed.

In the house where one of the toddlers lived, a man who said he was a cousin, pointed to bloodstained mattresses and blood-splattered pillows, choking back tears as he held up a photo showing one of the dead children.

"We were waking in the morning and all of a sudden rockets landed in the house and the children were screaming," said a woman outside the house.

The US military confirmed it had conducted early morning operations in Sadr city "targeting criminals believed to be responsible for the kidnapping of coalition soldiers in November 2006 and May 2007." **Reuters**

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known that a **WARRANT OF ARREST** for **SPOUSES MODESTO SISON AND SANDRA SIAPNO-SISON** of Brgy. Polong Sur, Malasique, Pangasinan has been issued by the Regional Trial Court Branch, 27 of San Fernando, La Union last October 10, 2007 in Criminal Case No. 7770 for the crime of **ESTAFA**.

Any information leading to the apprehension of the above individuals can be coursed through Branch 27 of the RTC of San Fernando, La Union.

(PDI - Oct. 22, 2007)

City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** invites PhilGEPS registered suppliers/manufacturer/contractors to apply for the following items.

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/Opening of Bids	
1. Construction of Two (2) Storey Eight (8) Classroom School Building at Maria Clara L. Lobregat National High School, Divisoria	P6,000,000.00	Nov. 14, 2007 10:00 AM	Nov. 26, 2007 10:00 AM	P3,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting October 31 to November 12, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope; whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope. In the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at Telephone No. (062) 992-7763.

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Oct. 22, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



CECILLE GABRIEL



MARIZELLE PETALINO

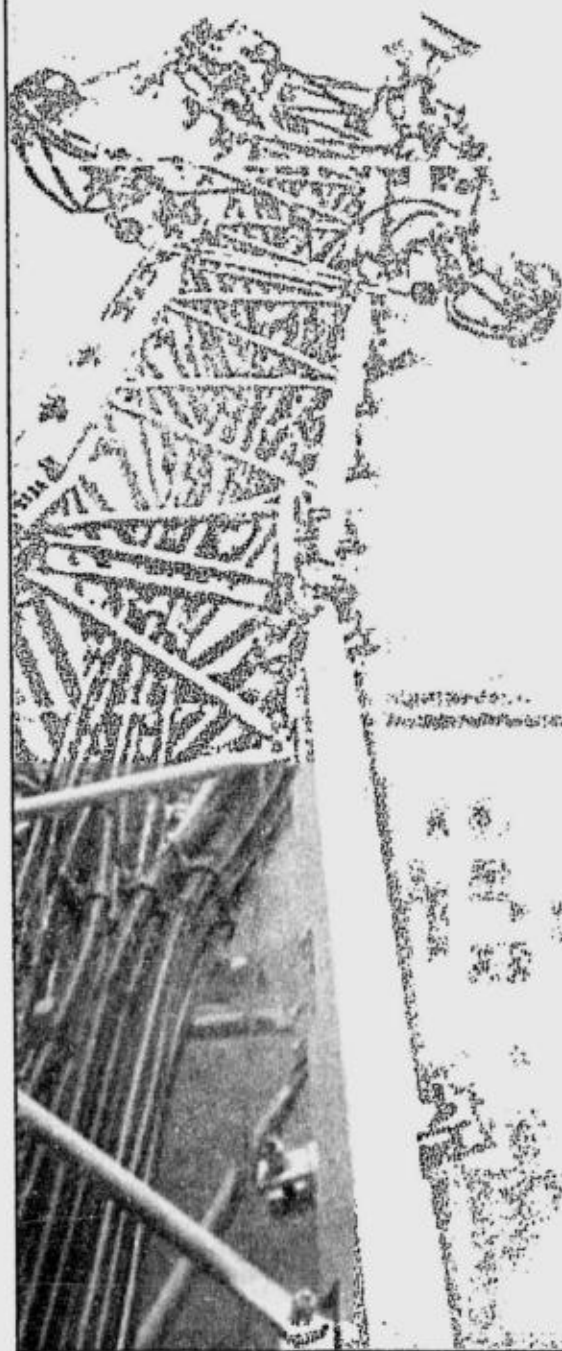
This is to inform the public that Ms. Cecille Mateo Gabriel and Ms. Marizelle Laggui Petalino, whose pictures appear above, are no longer connected with **CHOWKING ARANETA SQUARE/SAMI FOOD AND BEVERAGE INC.** effective February 2007.

Any transaction entered by them on behalf of the company shall no longer be honored.

(PDI - Oct. 22, 2007)

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

New leaders, economic plans in China as key Congress ends

BEIJING—CHINA'S COMMUNIST PARTY ON Sunday endorsed Hu Jintao's new economic model for the country, while opening the way for a top leadership reshuffle that will likely see the president consolidate his power.

Following the end of its five-yearly Congress, Hu, 64, is almost certain to be given a second term as party chief on Monday alongside a revamped lineup of leaders in the nation's most powerful political organ.

That body, the party's Standing Committee of the Politburo, currently has nine members but will see as many as four new faces in Monday's reshuffle, following the complex political events that took place at the Congress.

Hu gave a glowing assessment of the weeklong gathering, which brought more than 2,200 top cadres to Beijing, to outline the party's goals for the next five years, as well as finalize the leadership maneuverings.

"It has drawn up a grand blueprint for continuing to

build a moderately prosperous society," Hu said in a closing speech at the Great Hall of the People, although there was little in the way of much-touted democratic reforms.

While much speculation has focused on the new generation of leaders, and whether any of them will emerge as the clear frontrunner to succeed Hu in 2012, the president appeared to use the Congress to cement his hold over the party.

In that regard, the Congress appointed many Hu allies to the new 204-member Central Committee, which as its first task will on Monday formally approve the new Standing Committee.

The Congress also saw the party's constitution amended to include Hu's economic model for

the country that he has termed "scientific development."

This broadly means a greater emphasis on addressing environment concerns and China's army of poor as the nation develops, rather than a sole focus on breakneck economic growth as was the case under Hu's predecessor Jiang Zemin.

The move to include Hu's ideology in the constitution was seen as a sign that the president has been able to shake off some of the lingering influence of Jiang since succeeding him five years ago.

The makeup of the new Central Committee was also seen to have fewer cadres regarded as close to Jiang, who continues to wield some influence.

"By and large, Hu Jintao should be quite happy," Hong Kong-based writer and veteran China watcher Willy Lam said.

"Among the 204 Central Committee members, he successfully got most of his proteges named."

One high-profile resignation

on Sunday was Vice President Zeng Qinghong, 68, a man generally seen as being aligned to Jiang and who saw his tenure in the Standing Committee end.

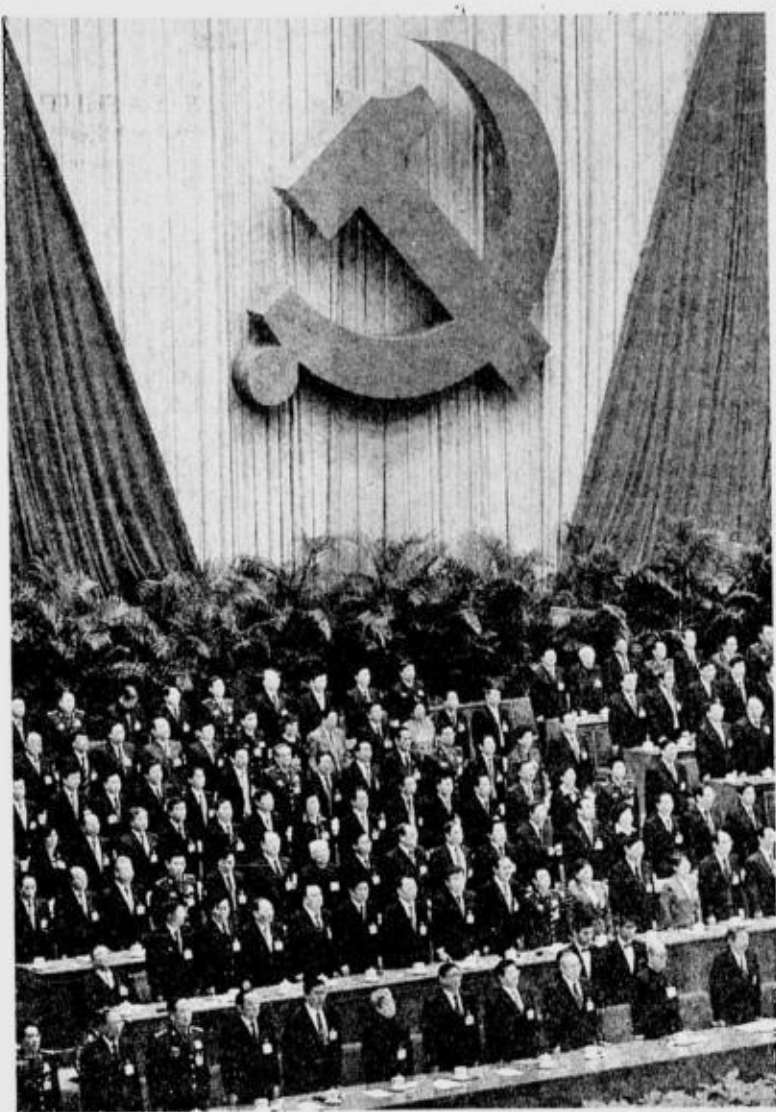
Zeng, Wu Guanzheng, 69, the head of the party's disciplinary committee, and security chief Luo Gan, 72, were not named on the party's new Central Committee, meaning they cannot be reappointed to the Standing Committee.

Two of the younger generation widely expected to be promoted into the Standing Committee are Shanghai party chief Xi Jinping, 54, and Li Keqiang, 52, head of northeastern Liaoning province and a political ally of Hu.

Xi and Li are regarded as the two favorites in the race to succeed Hu in 2012.

Among the other notable changes in the Central Committee lineup on Sunday was the removal of Vice Premier Wu Yi, known as the "iron lady" and the nation's most powerful woman.

AFP



COMMUNIST leaders and delegates stand while the national anthem is played during the concluding session of the 17th Party Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Oct. 21.

REUTERS

Pakistan at tipping point after Karachi bloodbath, say analysts

KARACHI—THE BLOODBATH at Benazir Bhutto's homecoming has pushed nuclear-armed Pakistan to crisis point, both politically and in its US-backed battle against al-Qaida and the Taliban, analysts said.

Her carnage-strewn return from exile deepened the faultlines that threaten the Islamic republic of 160 million people, which has lurched from one existential threat to another in its six decades of independence.

The blasts could move Bhutto closer to a power-sharing deal with key US ally President Per-

vez Musharraf, which western nations have pushed as a solution to the militancy seeping from Pakistan across the world.

Bhutto pledged to take on Islamic extremism in a defiant speech after the suicide and grenade attack on her homecoming parade that killed nearly 140 people, adding that she did not blame the "state or the government."

But fingerpointing over the alleged involvement of former officials and spy agencies in the wake of the attack could still scupper a pact that would likely bring a

measure of stability ahead of general elections in January.

Military ruler Musharraf meanwhile could yet break his promise to quit as Army chief by November, eight years after the coup that brought him to power, if the Supreme Court overturns his recent victory in a presidential election.

His popularity has slumped since he tried to sack the court's chief justice in March—while Islamic militants have paid him back for a bloody raid on the Red Mosque in Islamabad in July with 22 suicide bombings since then.

The militants too are at a crucial juncture, having taken control of the tribal belt bordering Afghanistan but fearing the move to civilian, democratic rule will foil their bid to spread Taliban-style Islamic sharia law.

"We are heading towards a major crisis," Moonis Ahmar, professor of international relations at Karachi University, said.

Analysts said Pakistan itself now faces the choice Bhutto did when she returned home—face a mortal risk at the hands of militants, or give in to extremists.

If the country chooses to go head-on at the threat, then political consensus will be vital, they added.

"Bhutto and Musharraf will be more vulnerable if they stand divided and pursue power separately," said Rasul Baksh Rais, a political science professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences.

"We have to put the political house in order, because as long as we have political contests and rivalries we may not be able to sustain our fight against terrorism," he added.

AFP



BHUTTO

REUTERS

Louisiana elects first Indian-American gov

WASHINGTON—THE son of Punjabi immigrants won an election in Louisiana, becoming the first Indian-American US state governor, media reports said Sunday.

Piyush "Bobby" Jindal, 36, a Republican member of the House of Representatives, is also the first non-white to hold the post since the 1870s and the nation's youngest governor, said The Advocate newspaper in the state capital Baton Rouge.

Jindal won 53 percent of the vote after more than 90 percent of votes were counted, the newspaper reported. His nearest challenger had just 18 percent. The score meant Jindal avoided a runoff election.

In 2004, Jindal became the second Indian-American to be elected



JINDAL

AP

to the US Congress. Some analysts blamed racism for his narrow 2003 loss in the Louisiana governorship race to Kathleen Blanco, a white moderate Democrat.

Blanco did not contend the race following a backlash at her administration's response to the 2005 Hurricane "Katrina" disaster and there had been no other strong opponents on the field.

Jindal was born and raised in Baton Rouge after his parents came to the United States so that his mother, pregnant with him at the time, could continue her graduate work in nuclear physics.

His father, an engineer, was one of nine children in a poor rural family in Punjab.

AFP

Palestinian gunmen planned to kill Olmert

JERUSALEM—PALESTINIAN gunmen planned to assassinate Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert when he came to the West Bank in August to meet with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli media cited a security chief as telling Israel's Cabinet on Sunday.

Shin Bet director Yuval Diskin told the Cabinet that the convoy was to be attacked as it entered the West Bank town of Jericho on Aug. 6, the Haaretz newspaper reported. Israel notified Palestinian authorities of the plan, and an unspecified number of militants—affiliated with Abbas' Fatah movement—were arrested, the newspaper said.

Although the men admitted they planned the attack, the Palestinian Authority released them last week, media reported. Olmert's office has protested their release to Abbas, the newspaper said.

A government spokesperson was unable to immediately confirm the reports, which had no further details about how close the militants got to carrying out the plot.

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US FDA panel urges ban on child colds medicine

SILVER SPRING, MD.—A FOOD and Drug Administration panel of experts voted Friday to ban popular over-the-counter cold products intended for children under the age of 6.

If put into practice, the vote could transform pharmacy shelves and change the way parents cope with the most common illness in young children. The vote comes a week after major manufacturers agreed to withdraw more than a dozen cold products labeled for use in infants and babies.

But manufacturers said that they would fight the new recommendations.

"We believe these products will remain on the market," said Linda Suydam, president of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association, an industry trade group.

"We need to go back and review all these recommendations that we heard today and decide what the path forward might be," Dr. John Jenkins, director of the FDA's office of new drugs, said after the meeting.

If the agency decides to adopt the committee's recommendation, it must undertake a rule-making process that can "take anywhere from one to many years," Jenkins said.

The products under review include such common brand names as PediaCare, Robitussin and Triaminic, which are made, respectively, by Johnson & Johnson, Wyeth and Novartis.

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Alcano falls at final hurdle, winds up 2nd

RONNIE ALCANO MISSED A chance to make pool history Saturday.



ALCANO: \$25,000

Shane Van Boening took the measure of the dual world champion Alcano for the second time in as many days, 13-10, and bagged the 32nd US Open crown Saturday night in Chesapeake, Virginia.

The loss prevented the 34-year-old Alcano from becoming the first player to reign supreme in the World Pool Championship, World 8-Ball Championship and US Open at the same time.

The 24-year-old Van Boening, who sent Alcano to the losers' bracket Friday, grabbed \$50,000 and a spot on Team USA in the Mosconi Cup. Alcano settled for \$25,000.

The two are expected to meet again and play key roles for their respective teams in the Kabayan World 9-Ball Challenge: Philippines vs Rest of the World on Nov. 12-13 in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro.

"It's very disappointing," said Alcano in Filipino during a telephone conversation with Bugsy Promotions manager Perry Mariano.

Alcano led by two after eight racks, 5-3, when he sued for time. After the breather, Alcano never holed a ball in his last six breaks.

"I've been breaking well the whole tournament," he said. "I don't know why I suddenly ran out of luck on my break."

Alcano also requested for a change of referee, but his bad spell continued.

Alcano was untouchable heading to the finals, routing his three opponents in the one-loss bracket to set up a rematch with Van Boening. He beat Louis Ulrich, 11-3, Ralf Souquet,

11-3 and Tomoki Mikari, 11-5.

Rumors of conspiracy to doom the chances of Filipino players started to circulate even before the tournament started.

Six marquee players from the Philippines, including Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante, were bunched in the same group. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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Cebu training for Donaire fight Darchinyan puts away Catubay



WORLD champion Nonito Donaire (left) with young phenom AJ Banal. SALVEN LAGUMBAY

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

CEBU CITY—IBF AND IBO FLY-weight champion Nonito Donaire Jr. is set to arrive in Cebu today to train at the famed ALA Gym in preparation for his Dec. 1 title defense against Mexican Luis Maldonado in Connecticut.

Donaire, accompanied by his father-trainer Nonito Sr., will be welcomed at the Cebu-Mactan International Airport by Antonio L.

Aldeguez, owner of the ALA Gym. The Donaires will be staying at the residence of United States-based Jun Laquindanum.

The 24-year-old Donaire will be making the first defense of his dual titles he won with a fifth-round TKO victory over Australia-based Armenian Vic Darchinyan on July 7 (See related story at right).

"We are very honored to be given the opportunity to train at the ALA Gym in Cebu," said Donaire Sr. in an e-mail.

FILIPINO FEDERICO CATUBAY PUT UP A gallant stand before Australia-based Armenian Vic Darchinyan put him away with a 12th-round technical knockout Saturday night in their IBO super flyweight title fight at the Auburn RSL Club in Sydney.

Darchinyan knocked the Filipino down in the seventh and 11th rounds before referee Gary Dean stopped the fight with 54 seconds left with Catubay reeling from telling shots. Catubay, who could not believe the fight was stopped, drew a lot of praise for giving Darchinyan a rough time.

Catubay's manager Sammy Gello-ani, in a long-distance call from Sydney, said the fighter

surprised everyone with his stand, earning plaudits for a "very competitive fight."

"We almost had Darchinyan," said Gello-ani. "Federico came in very well-prepared. I thought he could have finished the fight."

A report from eastsideboxing.com said Catubay "caught Darchinyan off balance in the sixth round with a wide shot and only the ropes saved him from visiting the canvas. A knock-down could have been called but it wasn't." Darchinyan regained control in the seventh with a three-punch salvo that sent Catubay down. Darchinyan continued his onslaught for the remainder of the round.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Thai powers Ateneo past UST spikers

By Romina S. Austria

ATENEON, NEVER CONSIDERED A serious contender in past stagings of the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament, is now officially a threat after pulsing University of Santo Tomas, 22-25, 25-22, 23-25, 25-19, 15-6, yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

Lithawat Kesinee produced 32 points, including 24 kills in her much awaited debut for Ateneo.

The 5-foot-10 Kesinee, who played for Thailand in the 2001 and 2003 Southeast Asian Games, imposed her will in the fourth as the Lady Eagles forced a fifth set.

Patricia Taganas and Charo Soriano combined for 25 points while Denise Acevedo, Karla Bello and Bea Pascual tossed in nine, seven and five points, re-

GAMES TOMORROW
(The Arena)
3 p.m.—San Sebastian vs Ateneo
5 p.m.—FEU vs UST

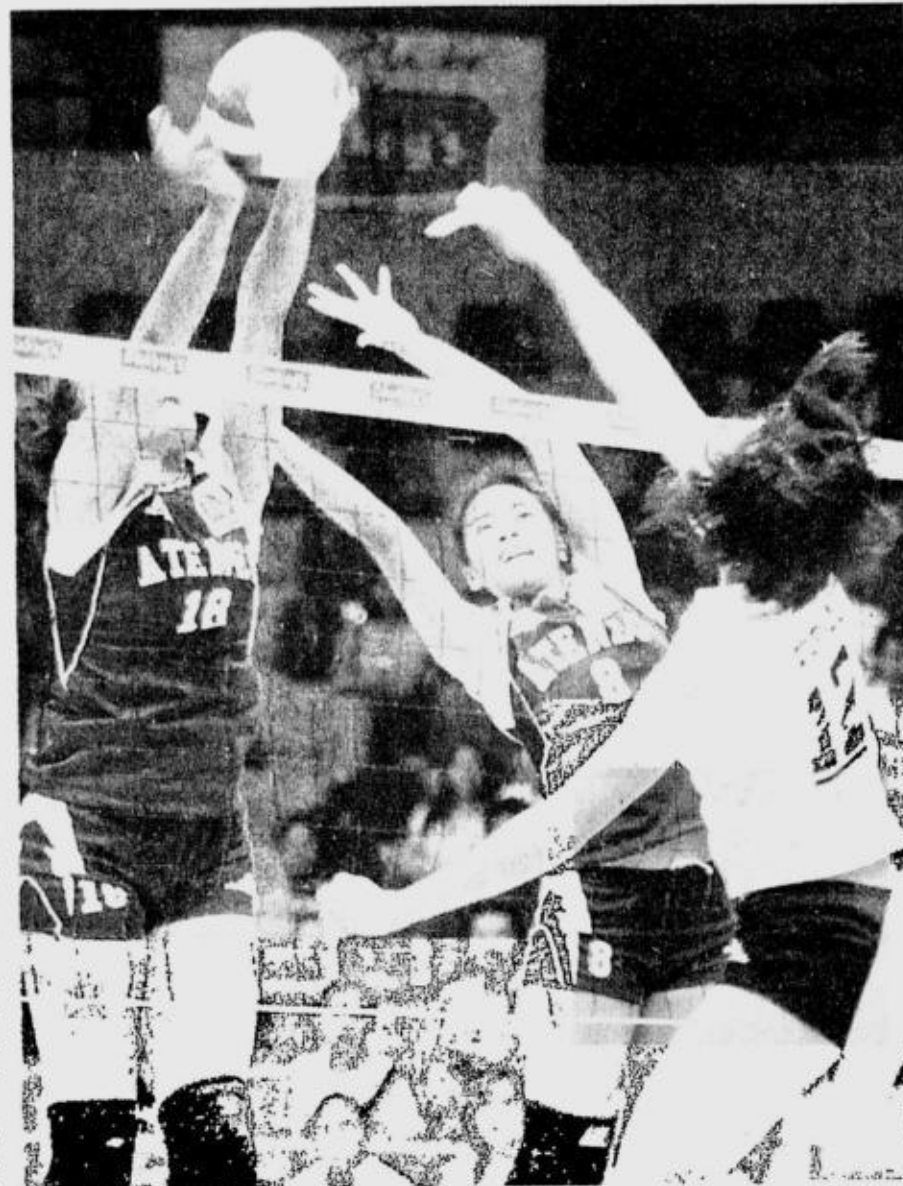
spectively.

The Tigresses, the first conference winners, eventually succumbed to the inspired Lady Eagles in the decider to fall to 1-1 in a tie with opening-day victim De La Salle.

In the second game, Far Eastern University downed Lyceum, 20-25, 25-23, 25-17, 22-25, 15-12.

The Lady Tamaraws notched their second straight win after losing their first match to the Adamson Lady Falcons. Lyceum joined Letran in the cellar at 0-2.

Meanwhile, INQUIRER lensman August dela Cruz took second place in the first conference photo contest and won P15,000. The Philippine Star's Jun Mendoza captured first prize and P20,000.



ATENEON'S Thai import Lithawat Kesinee (left) blocks a spike by Santo Tomas' Mary Jean Balse as Lady Eagle Charo Soriano provides support. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Wrestlers, archers keep QC bets afloat

By June Navarro

QUEZON CITY SCOOPED UP 10 gold medals in wrestling and added five more in archery to keep its grip of the overall lead yesterday in the National Capital Region qualifying leg of the Philippine Olympic Festival at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The QC grapplers scored through Isabelita Cardello (43 kilograms), Dennis Castro (60 kg), Miel Castaneda (50 kg), Arwin Dolpa (55 kg), Junrey Cabino (50 kg), Don Macaspac (freestyle), Kandice Mallonga (72 kg), Jeankie Pido (51 kg), Nikkor Ramos (74 kg) and Darwin Tusciano (84 kg).

Kristan Gabriel Villalon nailed three gold medals and Rizal Ledesma contributed two



UP Diliman's Lyka Joy Revillosa pins Christine Jo Lariosa in the judo final.

in archery for Quezon City, which picked up another victory through Ronni Virador in the bantamweight division of the muay thai competitions.

With six events still to be completed, Quezon City had a

59 gold, 38 silver and 25 bronze harvest.

Manila, which got a huge chunk of the medals at stake in archery, improved its second-running collection to 46 golds, 43 silvers and 45 bronzes.

MEDAL TALLY	G	S	B
Quezon City	59	38	25
Manila	46	43	45
Pasig	26	6	6
Parañaque	18	15	17
Muntinlupa	12	7	6
Taguig	10	14	22
Las Piñas	9	28	11
Marikina	7	10	17
Valenzuela	2	6	1
Pateros	2	0	1
San Juan	1	6	9
Malabon	0	2	1
Mandaluyong	0	1	2
Caloocan	0	1	1
Navotas	0	0	1

Ronalyn Alvarez accounted for four of the 12 archery gold medals for Manila which remained within striking distance of the overall title in the event backed by Globe, Accel, Philippine Sports Commission, Asia

Brewery, Ama Computer College and Creativity Lounge.

The remaining events are judo, arnis, football, basketball, gymnastics and taekwondo.

Quezon City, which relied heavily on the 32 golds produced by its swimmers, needs to match the medal output of Manila in these events to bag the overall crown trouble-free.

Karate also played a major role for Quezon City with 10 golds, eight from the kata event and a pair in the kumite courtesy of Ramon Saccalan (boys' 14-15) and Kevin Salas (16-17).

A far third was Pasig City with a 26-6-6 medal haul. Parañaque was fourth with 18-15-17 followed by Muntinlupa (12-7-6), Taguig (10-14-22), Las Piñas (9-28-11), Marikina (7-10-17) and Makati (5-9-5).

Vivere goes all the way in Sampaguita Stakes upset

By Musong R. Castillo

JONATHAN HERNANDEZ WAS A MASTER atop Vivere yesterday, guiding the fast-starting mare to an upset wire-to-wire triumph over longshot Sound of Silence in the Sampaguita Stakes race at the Santa Ana Park in Makati.

Vivere, who placed second behind Eurobucks last year, bolted out in front

and stayed there throughout the 1,800-meter race, holding off a host of pursuers with a courageous effort to secure the biggest victory of her career, worth P900,000.

Sound of Silence came charging from the tail of the field and almost pulled it out under Jeffryl Zarate. She checked in two lengths behind the winner for P337,500.

Sent off as the far fifth favorite in the nine-horse field, Vivere wasted no time in going for the jugular, trailed closely most of the way by Tellmenolies and Patty Dilema, before Hernandez asked for more juice rounding the far turn.

And it was there where the entire cavalry charged, with Sound of Silence getting the benefit of a wide-open rail to come within a length heading into the fi-

nal 100 meters.

But Hernandez hand-rode Vivere to perfection to fend off Sound of Silence in 1 minute and 54 seconds, broken down in 14, 23, 24, 25 and 27.

Tellmenolies still salvaged third place worth P187,500, while first pick Special Edition, the winner of the Triple Crown's second leg last year, was fourth, about four lengths behind the winner.

Laborte-Torres just too tough

SUBIC BAY—SHERYL Laborte and Jenny Torres swept Asian College of Science and Technology standouts Apple Sebastian and Mary Anne Calleja, 21-9, 21-11, in the finals to rule the 2007 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball Battle of Champions at the Subic Bay Freepoint.

Laborte and Torres finished their two-day campaign with six straight wins.

It was actually the 24-year-old Laborte's second straight Battle of Champions title after winning last year's event with elder sister Michelle.

Laborte and Torres also won the series' third leg in August at Clearwater Country Club in Clark Field, Pampanga.



JENNY Torres (left) and Sheryl Laborte celebrate their victory.

Laborte and Torres, who shared the P10,000 champion's prize, reached the finals after routing Ateneo's Dang Ruiz and Anja Echavez, 21-

11, in the semifinals.

Sebastian and Calleja arranged the title clash by besting Roseanne Mercado and Rowena Felices, 21-19.

PI-M stagfest at SJC today

A GUARANTEED PRIZE OF P1 MILLION IS at stake today in a 5-stag derby featuring selected derby regulars at the San Juan Coliseum.

Roger Segismundo and Raymond Turla, with their RS Fairview entry, are hosting the event backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Entry fee is P33,000.

Main supporters of this one-day stagfest are the LCC group of Louie Cua, SJC Cockers Club, Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA) and the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA).

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

RECAH Trinidad is on leave. His column, Bare Eye, will be back on Nov. 3.



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SEA Games five ready with or without Gabe

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE HARBOUR-RP TEAM IS ready for action in the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand in December even if Fil-Am sensation Gabe Norwood fails to join the all-amateur national crew.

"We have a long-standing invitation to Norwood," said national

coach Junel Baculi. "We need all the help we can get. Like with the San Beda players, they practiced with us, but in the end the school didn't allow them to play."

Baculi said he is worried that Hapee Toothpaste, Norwood's team in the PBL, might not eventually allow the George Mason

SEAG/A36

Club champs dispute 5 titles

Tourney at Eagle Ridge lures 25 teams

REPRESENTATIVES FROM 25 CLUBS ALL over the country aim for five division titles in the National Tournament of Club Champions presented by HSBC and INQUIRER Golf starting today at three courses of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Park Jung-soo of Eastridge is back to defend his men's title while the ladies, seniors and the two special division crowns are up for the taking as players dispute the best-of-the-best crown and the once-in-a-lifetime chance to witness the world's best lady players in action.

The men's, ladies and seniors division winners will win a trip to Singapore in March next year and get a chance to watch the HSBC Women's Champions event where Lorena Ochoa, Annika Sorenstam and the rest of the best players in ladies pro golf will show their wares in the LPGA Tour season-opener.

Heading the ladies roster are Vinice Godio of Alabang and Sta. Elena as well as Leana Farrales of Canlubang, the losing finalists in the last two stagings of the ladies division, while the seniors cast is bannered by Riviera's Danny Pizarro and Airlift Asia president Rico Brizuela of Ayala Greenfield.

Also supporting the prestigious event are Toyota as major sponsor and Callaway/Electrobus, Titleist/Dynamic Sports, Coca-Cola

and Pocari Sweat as hole sponsors.

Action starts with the stroke play qualifying in the men's, seniors and special divisions with the top scorers advancing to the match plays. The ladies qualifying was moved for tomorrow in lieu of the final leg of the WGAP Circuit.

The special division for those who did not make the 26 years-and-above age cutoff features jungolf standouts Jikjik Abdon, Maan Legaspi and Wolen and Crystal Superal.

The competing clubs and their representatives: Aguineldo (Ronnie Littaua, Marjorie Pulumbanti, Tony dela Cruz); Alabang (Iggy Clavecilla, Venice Godio, Sengyo Kato); Alta Vista (Enrico Solon, Geraldine Ash, Felix Villanueva); Ayala Greenfield (Rico Brizuela); Baguio Country Club (Mars Garcia, Nanette Filler); Camp John Hay (Koh Seng Min, Lilibeth Ratcliffe, Bob Patterson); Canlubang (Leana Farrales, Philip Brodett); Eastridge (Park Jung-soo);

Eagle Ridge (Min Koo-jae, Kim Yoon-young); Forest Hills (Raffy Garcia, Violy Pegels, Ed Rendon); Iloilo (Mark Rivera, Kristine Popp, Frankie Locsin); Manila Southwoods (Marty Ilagan, Rio Co); Malarayat (Abe Avena, Princess Katigbak, Katy Katigbak); Orchard (Wolen Superal, Princess Superal, Pacifico Lim);

Rancho Palos Verdes (Jessie Tan, Nonoy Llamas); Riviera (John Kier Abdon, Ma. Andrea Legaspi, Danny Pizarro); Royal Northwoods (Rodel Mangulabnan, Lyn Mangulabnan); Sherwood Hills (Dr. Larry Tojino, Nila Patricia, Edgardo David); Sta. Elena (Jingy Tuason, Vinice Godio); Summit Point (Lino Magpantay); Tagaytay Highlands (Totsie de Jesus, Hedy See); Tagaytay Midlands (Oliver Gan); The Country Club (Therese Davao); Valley (Rafael Raymundo, Evangeline Apuhin, Bonifacio Sumbilla); Wack Wack (John Gobing, Katya dela Cruz, Andy Vasquez)

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Red Sox force AL decider

BOSTON—FROM THE BRINK OF elimination, Boston forced a Game 7 of the American League championship series with a 12-2 win over Cleveland on Saturday, thanks to a dominant performance by slugger J.D. Drew.

The Red Sox right fielder, who had been in a form slump, hit a grand slam home run and drove in five runs. Added to another postseason gem from veteran pitcher Curt Schilling, Boston levelled the series at 3-3 having earlier trailed 3-1.

"We needed tonight's game, we needed a good performance for Schilling," Drew said. "We got that, now we're going to play in Game 7."

After failing to get a victory from aces C.C. Sabathia and Fausto Carmona, the Indians hope pitcher Jake Westbrook is the answer at Boston's Fenway Park on Sunday.

The Red Sox turn to Daisuke Matsuzaka, who has not pitched well so far in the postseason.

"It's going to come down to Game 7, the two teams that won more baseball games than anybody over the regular season, two teams that beat up each other over the past week," Indians manager Eric Wedge said.

A third consecutive victory would put Boston in the World Series for the first time since 2004, when it rallied from a 3-0 deficit in the ALCS to beat the New York Yankees en route to its first title in 86 years.

After stumbling in his previous outing, Schilling came back to show why he is considered among the best post-season pitchers in baseball history.

Schilling gave up Victor Martinez's solo homer in the second inning but otherwise held the Indians scoreless until Ryan Garko tripled and scored on

Jhonny Peralta's sacrifice fly in the seventh. By that time, it was already 10-2.

Schilling got Kenny Lofton on a grounder and former teammate Trot Nixon on a fly ball to end the seventh, then left to a standing ovation. He took his hat off twice and waved up at the box where his wife and family sit.

He allowed two runs on six hits, striking out five and walking none to improve to 10-2 in his career in the postseason.

Carmona failed to get anybody out in the third inning, allowing seven runs on six hits and four walks and striking out two.

Much of the damage was done by Drew.

Drew has struggled to live up to the five-year, \$70-million (50 million euro) contract the Red Sox threw at him last winter even though no one else seemed interested in bidding. He was

signed to protect power hitters David Ortiz and Manny Ramirez in the lineup, but manager Terry Francona dropped him from fifth to sixth in the lineup when he failed to deliver timely hits in the regular season.

Coming into the game, Drew was 0-for-6 with runners in scoring position, 1-for-11 in the two series combined and batting just .237 in 2007 overall. But when he came up with the bases loaded in the first inning against Carmona, he delivered.

Dustin Pedroia and Kevin Youkilis had reached on infield singles, and Ortiz looked at six straight pitches for a walk. Ramirez struck out, then Mike Lowell was out on a shallow fly to right.

All Carmona needed to do to end the inning was to get Drew.

The winner of Sunday's game will face Colorado in the World Series. AP

T-Mac gives tyro tough court tests

SEATTLE—SEATTLE SUPERSONICS rookie Kevin Durant realized a dream Saturday night when he was on the same court with his boyhood idol, Tracy McGrady.

The reality, however, is Durant has a lot to learn before he can measure up to the 11-year NBA star.

McGrady scored 30 points and the Houston Rockets beat the Sonics, 117-94, to spoil Durant's home debut. Durant, the No. 2 pick out of Texas, finished with 25 points on 9-of-20 shooting.

"He's got a lot of talent," said McGrady, who was 10-of-20 from the floor and made all nine free throws before sitting out the final 17 minutes. "I think right now it's such a huge burden on his shoulders because they're such a young team. He has to be a scorer. All eyes are on him. There's so much hype."

"He just needs to continue to learn the NBA game. He was kind of forcing some shots tonight but that just comes from being young."

Durant, averaging 16.8 points in his first four games, said McGrady became just another player at the opening tip.

"I noticed that we're both in the same league. We're both playing in the NBA. I can't be star-struck when I see Tracy McGrady or (Cleveland's) LeBron James," Durant said. "But it was fun playing against him. Just going up against him was a dream come true."

Durant gave the Sonics (1-4) their only lead of the game, 2-0, hitting his first shot 30 seconds in. Then the Rockets galloped away. AP

Massa takes pole ahead of Hamilton

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL—LEWIS HAMILTON may have a hard time sleeping on the eve of one of the most important races of his short career.

Hamilton clinched a front row spot for Sunday's decisive, season-ending Brazilian Grand Prix, moving a step closer to a historic title that would make him the youngest champion in Formula One history.

"I'm just buzzing, I'm really buzzing," the 22-year-old Briton said. "I'm really excited, I feel very relaxed. The car feels great underneath me."

Ferrari's Felipe Massa took the pole position Saturday for the decisive Brazilian GP, with Hamilton beside him and in a commanding position to become F1's first rookie champion.

Kimi Raikkonen and Fernando Alonso—Hamilton's rivals for the title—will start in the second row, with Raikkonen third and Alonso fourth.

"This is sensational," Massa said. "And hopefully the guys behind me will have a good fight."

Massa, last year's winner in Brazil, drove his Ferrari around the 4.3-kilometer (2.6-mile) anti-clockwise Interlagos track in 1 minute, 11.931 seconds. The Brazilian was .151 faster than Hamilton and .391 faster than Ferrari teammate Raikkonen. Alonso, Hamilton's McLaren teammate, timed 1:12.356.

The tight F1 race has Hamilton ahead with 107 points, four more than Alonso and seven more than Raikkonen. AP



Federer battles old foe Nalbandian

MADRID—DEFENDING CHAMPION Roger Federer will meet Argentina's David Nalbandian in Sunday's Madrid Masters final following a low-key 6-4, 6-4 semifinal win over Nicolas Kiefer.

The Swiss world number one claimed his 18th straight match victory dating to a loss in the Montreal final last summer against Serb Novak Djokovic as he set up a Sunday clash with old foe Nalbandian.

Against Kiefer, excitement was often at a premium with Federer knocking

on the door against the veteran German but unable to convert on more than two of a dozen break point chances.

But a win is a win for the holder of 12 grand slam titles who won the Spanish trophy a year ago over Fernando Gonzalez.

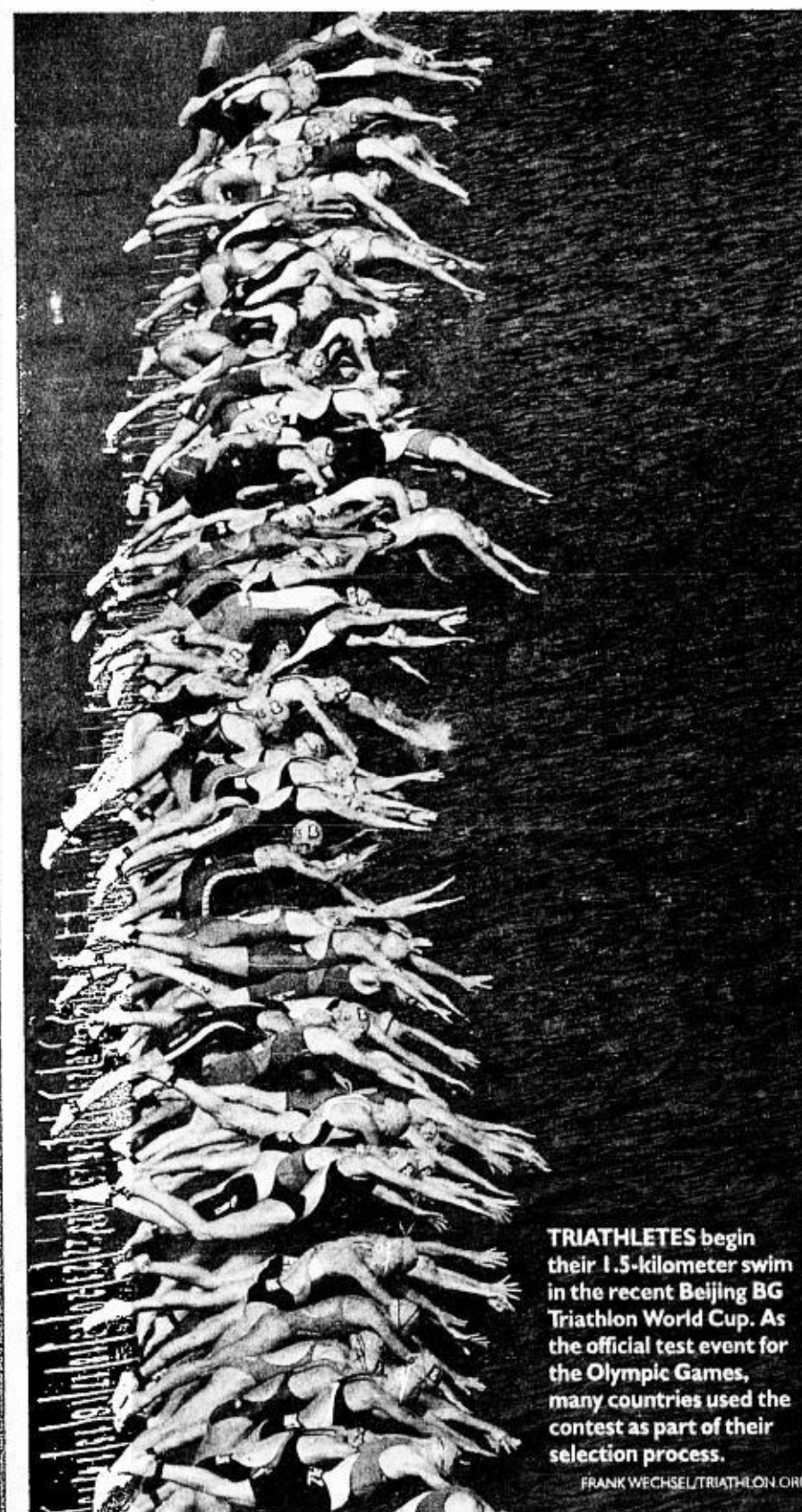
"We had a siesta out there in the first set, there was not much to excite the crowd. It was very subdued and with not a lot of great shots," said Federer, who leads the field at the season-

wrapup Masters Cup in Shanghai from Nov. 11. "It was not the best match but I'm happy that I won."

Nalbandian came alive as the two-time semifinalist and 2004 runner-up stunned Djokovic, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

The Argentine's best performance of the year prior to this week was a Barcelona quarterfinal in the spring.

He denied the world number three the chance to move towards a third Masters title of the season after winning Miami and Montreal. AFP



TRIATHLETES begin their 1.5-kilometer swim in the recent Beijing BG Triathlon World Cup. As the official test event for the Olympic Games, many countries used the contest as part of their selection process.

FRANK WECHSEL/TRIATHLON.ORG

Olympic course awes world's top triathletes

By Jasmine W. Payo

CHANGPING—A GRAYISH HUE dominated the skyline.

Yet the Olympic fever remained in the air as the world's top triathletes gathered in the suburban Changping district, 40 kilometers north of downtown Beijing in China.

Less than a year before Beijing hosts the world's biggest sports spectacle, the athletes, it seemed, had learned to adjust to the blanket of smog that covered the city.

In a recent report by the European Satellite Agency, Beijing and its environs in northeast China were named as having the world's highest levels of nitrogen dioxide, a key smog gas originating from power plants, heavy industry and vehicle emissions and can cause fatal lung damage.

"I'm confident for next year's race; I know the Olympic Games will be different," said Javier Gomez of Spain, the world's No. 1 triathlete.

Rather than tackle pollution's health risk—a particular concern in endurance sports like triathlon—Gomez turned his attention to the Olympic race course and the weather.

"The design of the course is a bit challenging," said the 24-year-old Gomez after capturing the crown in the 2007 Beijing BG Triathlon World Cup held recently at the scenic Ming Tomb Reservoir in Changping.

"You never know what will happen. I will just train well and arrive back here in the best shape."

"The course is amazing; but it's a fierce course," said runner-up Courtney Atkinson of Australia.

The Olympic preview turned too fierce, in fact, that at least 16 male elite racers failed to finish the course, including 2006 world champion Tim Don of Great Britain, who pulled out after a bike crash.

"It's a difficult bike course," said Atkinson. "It's going to be hard no matter how you look at it. Next year is going to be a whole different ball game. We have a lot of training to do."

Gomez ruled the official Olympic test event of the 1.5km swim-40km bike-10km run sport in one hour, 48 minutes and 41 seconds.

Top-seeded Vanessa Fernandes of Portugal dominated the women's competition anew in 2:00:35.

"I think I learned what I have to do next year; I think we will have a great event here," the 22-year-old Fernandes said.

"But the weather sometimes is not a good friend. The races can be harder. You have to prepare for it."

"Fortunately during the race, the weather was good for racing, it was not too hot," noted Gomez. "But I think in August during the Olympics, it will be hotter. We have to adjust to the weather."

"You just have to prepare for anything," said Australian Emma Snowsill, runner-up to Fernandes. "In every race, you prepare whether it's hot or cold. You just prepare either way it's going to go."

Corcuera home run sparks Cebu

GAMES SUNDAY (Rizal Memorial Ballpark)
7 a.m.—Cebu vs Manila
10:30 a.m.—Makati vs Dumaguete
2 p.m.—Marikina vs Taguig

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MIGGY CORCUERA, WHO LEARNED baseball in California, slammed a three-run homer in the first inning as Cebu pounded Taguig, 6-2, to keep the lead in the Baseball Philippines Series 2 yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Ballpark.

The rotund 21-year-old balik-bayan now taking up business management in San Beda deposited Ernesto Binara's first pitch at the foot of the manual scoreboard, driving home Jon de Ubago and Jonash Ponce to send the Dolphins on their

way to a third straight victory.

National pitcher Joseph Orillana of Cebu gave up three hits while fanning out 15 batters in eight innings before Taguig manufactured a meaningless run off Korean Ha Sung-jung in the ninth.

Earlier, Marikina dealt defending champion Makati a stinging 8-1 rout as the Shoemakers exploited the decision by an irate Mariners team manager Jeffrey Santiago to use his second-string pitchers at the start.

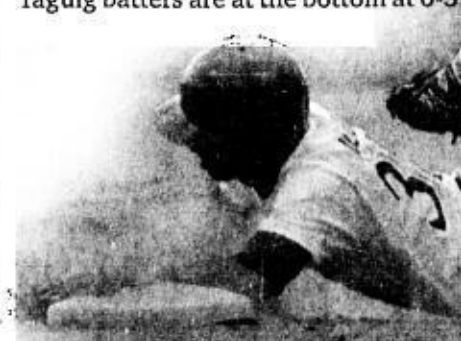
With Santiago benching RP team maidens Jonjon Robles, Alfredo Hildado and Chris Canlas for arriving just minutes before the 7 a.m. game, Marikina erupted for four runs in the third inning and two in the fourth which proved decisive.

Vladimir Eguia spun a five-hitter in a

no-relief job as the Shoemakers tied the Mariners for second at 2-1.

Virgilio Roxas smashed a solo home run in the third inning as Manila finally scored its first win in three outings with a 6-3 victory over Dumaguete.

The Unibikers fell to 1-2 while the Taguig batters are at the bottom at 0-3.



MANILA'S Larry Icban (right) tries to tag out Dumaguete's Lito Pulgo.

RYAN LIM

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SPORTS

MILO MARATHON

Hot Pascua, Basilio rule Laoag 21K

LAOAG CITY—REYNALDO PASCUA CAPTURED HIS FOURTH consecutive leg championship even as Marby Abigail Basilio claimed her first title by technicality yesterday in the 31st National Milo Marathon qualifying leg which ended at the Marcos Stadium.



THE top three finishers in the men's race (starting third from left: Rabin Dalog, Reynaldo Pascua and Randy Basilio) are flanked by, from left, Milo's Pat Goc-ong, Gov. Michael Keon, Nestle regional sales manager Patrick Belen Dino and Ilocos Norte sports consultant Geraldine Paderon.

Pascua outsprinted Rabin Dalog at the finish and secured his 11th 21K overall title—including those he won in Tuguegarao—with a time of one hour, 14 minutes and 34 seconds.

Dalog crossed the finish line two seconds behind Pascua while Randy Basilio, Marby Abigail's husband, was third in 1:18:32.

Marby Abigail came in only second in the women's 21K in 2:14:07 but first placer Jenny Lyn Suguita was disqualified for declaring a false age.

Suguita insisted that she is already 18 years old, the minimum age requirement for the 21K race, but Milo Marathon records showed that she was only 15 when she placed second in the 5K side event here last year.

A cousin of Suguita, Christia Mae, who finished fourth in the 21K run, confirmed that Jenny Lyn is just 16.

Taiwanese Ann Chang was declared second in the race with a

time of 2:19:33 with former three-time winner Vilma Butac salvaging third place in 2:19:33 despite a recent bout with the flu.

All top three finishers in both divisions advance to the 31st Milo grand finals on Nov. 18 in Metro Manila with the leg winners Pascua and Basilio bagging P10,000 each.

Ilocos Norte Gov. Michael Keon fired the starting gun that flagged off the 21K runners. He later joined the 5K run and helped Milo AVP for Sports Pat Goc-ong in handing the trophies and medals to the top 10 winners.

The top finishers in the 5K fun run were Romero Dalog and Vanessa Lea Marcos while the winners in the 3K race for kids were Sherwin Guieb and Krizza Melchor in the 6-9 age group and Bailon Magbaleta and Jessa Maine Eda in the 10-12 category.

The qualifying series holds its last two legs in Tuguegarao on Oct. 28 and in Baguio on Nov. 4.

SEA Games five . . .

From page A33

University alumnus to join the team if it fares poorly in the PBL V-Go Extreme Energy Drink Cup.

Hapee said earlier it was open to loaning the 6-foot-5 Norwood—who made a strong impression with the all-pro San Miguel-RP squad in the Fiba Asia championship in Tokushima, Japan last July—to the Harbour-RP five.

"Nothing is final," said new PBL chair and Hapee team owner Cecilio Pedro. "If there's anything we can do to help, why not?"

Norwood returned to the country last Wednesday.

"The lineup isn't final, but at least we have the core," said Baculi, who is building his team

around back-to-back PBL Most Valuable Player Jason Castro and UAAP MVP Jervy Cruz.

"The PBL is not standing in the way of the RP team," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad. "We're making sure that everyone gives his total support."

Patrick Cabahug, Jonathan Fernandez, Beau Belga, Chad Alonzao, Jeff Chan, Erick dela Cuesta, Eugene Tan, Boyet Bautista, Allan Salangsang and former pro Alex Crisano complete the roster.

Baculi has also extended his invitation to Rico Maierhofer and TY Tang, mainstays of UAAP champion La Salle, after San Beda standouts Ogie Menor and Pong Escobal backed out.

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Gov't revives plan to issue \$1-B OFW bonds

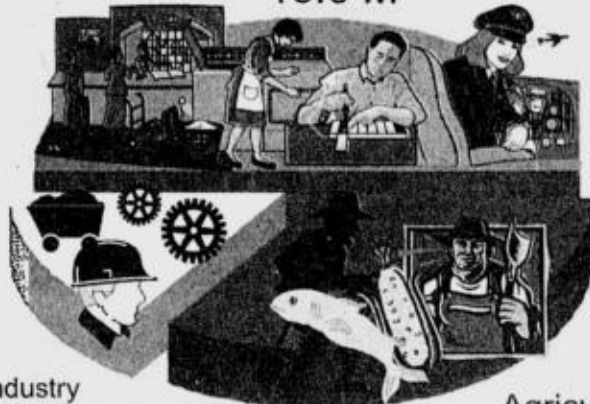
INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Services sector biggest employer (Labor Force Survey)

Nearly one in every two Filipinos employed as of July 2007 was with the Services sector.

Services
16.6 M



Industry
5.2 M

Agriculture
11.5 M

Source: National Statistics Office
Kate Pedrosa Inquirer Research

Rechannel remittances to productive investments

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE GOVERNMENT HAS REVIVED PLANS TO OFFER AS MUCH as \$1 billion in retail treasury bonds to overseas Filipino workers as proposed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to harness large remittance flows for productive investments.

BSP Managing Director Ma. Cyd Amador said the BSP and the Bureau of the Treasury have resumed discussions on the proposed OFW bonds.

"It looks like they (Treasury officials) are more open this time around," Amador said.

She said the BSP and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration were considering to hold overseas roadshows on financial literacy, focusing on countries which host big Filipino communities.

The BSP holds financial literacy programs but only in domestic locations. These financial literacy campaigns emphasize the importance of saving and inform the participants of

alternative opportunities for their remittances such as placements in financial instruments and investments in business ventures.

The proposed OFW bond issuance aims to channel more OFW inflows for economic development while giving OFW households lucrative investment outlets. These savings and investments are seen helping prepare OFWs for future reintegration into the Philippine economy and providing additional funding for government requirements, including funds for infrastructure development.

The offering size proposed by the BSP was based on the assumption that OFWs could

GOV'T REVIVES/B6

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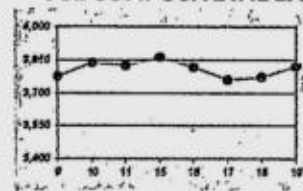
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STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



OCTOBER

(See stock market report on Page B6)

DOTC eyes NBN project with local telcos

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and Communications (DOTC) may hold a bidding on a new version of the National Broadband Network (NBN) project with local telecom companies next year.

Assistant Communications Secretary Lorenzo Formoso, who is leading the agency's efforts to improve government connectivity nationwide while saving on telecommunications expenses, said in an interview that

the timeline for the bidding may be finalized before the year ends.

"What (local telcos) have is the list of the specific requirements and the quality of service needed. Like for central offices we need at least 2 mbps connection, that is the committed rate and not the burst speed. They will come up with comments and suggestions as far as NBN functionalities are concerned within one week. The government will then, taking all of these into consideration, prepare the terms of reference. We will then tender it, then they will submit (their of-

fers). At the very least we should do (the bidding) by next year," he said.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza earlier said in a forum that despite the cancellation of the controversial NBN deal with China's ZTE Corp., the government still needed to provide broadband access to government agencies nationwide, down to the barangay offices.

"The DOTC's exploratory talks with Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Globe Telecom, Bayan Telecommunication and Digitel started Oct. 9. It (fo-

cused) on how the government can lower the government's ballooning telecom expenses," he said. "The DOTC has formed a technical working group to flesh out the telecom needs of the government and to see how the private sector can meet them at the best price possible."

The government's telecommunication project generally endeavors to interconnect government offices down to the municipal level.

Mendoza said the secure interconnection of government offices is man-

DOTC EYES/B3

Makati blast seen to dampen trading

THE STOCK MARKET IS EXPECTED TO take a hit this week as a powerful explosion at the heart of Makati's financial district is seen to temporarily unnerve market investors.

Stock trading had ended Friday when an early afternoon explosion in Glorietta, Makati City's premiere shopping mall, killed eight people and wounded more than a hundred.

"We'll probably see a knee-jerk reaction on the first day, since the market is near its high for the year. It has room to go down," said Jovis Vistan, head of research at AB Capital Securities.

MAKATI/B3

DTI still hopeful on Jpepa

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE OFFICIALS remain confident that the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement would be ratified even as it faces mounting resistance from groups who believe the Treaty violates the Constitution and would make the country a dumping ground for toxic wastes.

Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino, who was the chief negotiator during the Jpepa talks, said former Supreme Court Associate Justice Florentino Feliciano was expected to present to the Senate a follow-up position paper that would clarify a previous one.

On Oct. 8, Feliciano told a Senate hearing on the Jpepa that the treaty violated constitutional safeguards on national patrimony because it gave the Japanese the right to exploit the country's marine resources when this is exclusively for Filipino nationals.

DTI STILL/B5

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IMF urges RP, Asian countries to cut export dependence

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND has urged emerging Asia to reduce its over-reliance on exports and increase exchange

Says growing regional trade not a shield vs risks

rate flexibility to avoid sowing the seeds of a new crisis 10 years after the devastating turmoil that caused unprecedented a currency freefall in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and South Korea.

While the region's financial sectors are in stronger shape than in the last decade, the IMF said that more banking reforms must be pursued if the region were to successfully cope with increasingly complex and volatile capital flows.

"Policymakers in the region are acutely aware of these challenges and the need to guard against complacency, as crises seldom repeat themselves but rather tend to emerge from previously under-appreciated sources of vulnerability," the IMF said in its Asia-Pacific economic outlook released Friday night.

In a chapter that discussed lessons from the Asian currency crisis, the IMF examined growing concerns that Asia's export-oriented strategy might build up a new type of crisis—one triggered by shocks to external demand or the bursting of credit and asset bubbles propped up by the large accumulation of foreign reserves needed to sustain competitive exchange rates.

"Asia remains too dependent on exports as an engine of growth, and a concomitant rebalancing appears more needed than ever, not least through higher exchange rate flexibility," the IMF said.

The Fund also warned that a growing intra-regional trade would not necessarily provide a strong buffer against shocks to external demand.

"This is because in Asia, it is by and large dominated by trade in intermediate and large, in a vertically integrated system of regional supply chains geared toward the rest of the world, notably the United States and the European Union, with China playing a key platform role," the IMF said.

It observed that shocks to external demand had in the recent past caused sharp slowdowns in the region, although there were grounds to be guardedly optimistic for Asia if growth in the United States were to falter.

A stronger global economy than in 2001 and healthier domestic demand in Asia should help the region better confront a possible sharp US slowdown this time around, the IMF said.

But the IMF said it was premature to tell whether Asia could be insulated from a US slowdown given the region's strong dependence on exports and the growing importance of international financial linkages.

It added that the region, particularly India and China, which were facing the challenge of continuous capital inflows, must increase exchange rate flexibility and take more steps to liberalize outflows.

On balance, the IMF said Asia had learned many of the key lessons from the crisis and, while vulnerabilities exist within countries, the region is far more resilient to shocks today.

It noted that more flexible exchange rate regimes had cushioned external shocks and an impressive war chest of official reserves has been built up; short-term external debt had been reduced significantly; inflation targeting has provided a monetary anchor in many cases; and fiscal policies had taken on a longer-term perspective to safeguard debt sustainability.

At the same time, the level of risk awareness among policymakers and private sector agents across Asia has also increased markedly, the IMF said. These improvements were seen hedging the region against systemic risks, but the Fund said a slowdown cannot be ruled out, particularly under current global conditions.

In the near term, the IMF said Asia's economies appeared to be on a "less precarious footing than sometimes imagined."

"This, however, should not mask important challenges facing the region," it said. More directly, the IMF said the main lesson of the Asian crisis was that financial imbalances could wreak havoc on an economy, even one with seemingly sound macroeconomic fundamentals.

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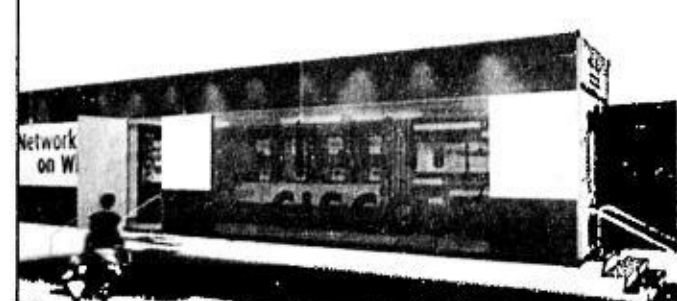
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Pump priming the economy

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THE EXPRESSION "pump priming the economy." It was used by the Ramos and Estrada administrations before, and is now apparently being used by the current government, in an effort to stimulate the economy into higher growth.

The metaphor comes from the way a dried-up water pump can be made to bring forth water again by pouring water into ("priming") the pump and filling the pipe connecting it to the groundwater below, thereby helping draw out the water continuously thereafter.

Multiplier effect

Lord John Maynard Keynes' legacy to economic knowledge was the prescription that government can spend its way out of an economic recession. Like pouring water into a dry pump, government can pour money into the economy to draw out the money lying in private hands therein. This happens through the way government spending undergoes a process that multiplies the original spending—and the economic activity it directly provokes—several times over.

As I sum it up to my students, this multiplier process happens because one person's spending is another one's income. Subject to their saving behavior, this income then funds new spending that again becomes income for others, and so on, going round and round and generating more production and income along the way. The more people spend (i.e. the less they save) out of each round of income, the greater the multiplier effect will be.

Ramos pump priming

Soon after I had assumed office as NEDA director general in July 1992, President Fidel V. Ramos tasked me to chair an Inter-agency Committee on Pump-Priming the Economy. We were starting off then with an economy that was barely growing, having been recently battered by repeated coup attempts, a devastating earthquake, and the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. The immediate need then was to lift the economy out of lethargy, and pump priming seemed the obvious way to accomplish this.

One of the committee's first recommendations for spending government money quickly was to pay out half of government employees' 13th month Christmas bonus in the middle of the year. It was a welcome and timely move that helped government employees finance their children's school fees, and has since been institutionalized not only for government employees but for those in the private sector as well. Apart from early payment of half the 13th month pay, our committee identified government infrastructure projects that could be fast-tracked and implemented right away.

The scheme worked. From virtually zero GDP growth in 1991 and about 1.5 percent growth in 1992, the economy returned to health by 1993 and sped on to dynamic growth by the mid-'90s.

Deficit spending

Keynes had argued that it was enough for government to spend more to stimulate the economy, whether it has the money or not to fund it. In other words, it could engage in unfunded spending that actually raises its fiscal deficit (and forcing it to borrow to fill the gap). In fact, increasing government spending while raising taxes at the same time to finance it would not be as effective in perking up the economy as deficit spending would. This is because raising taxes would take away money from people's pockets, thereby lessening their own spending and offsetting whatever increased spending the government does with the same money.

On the other hand, the government can only afford so much borrowing before the burden of servicing the debt takes its toll on the economy as well. Thus, pump priming had not been much of an option in the earlier years of the Arroyo administration, when a heavy accumulated debt burden had brought government to the brink of financial collapse.

Stubborn pump

But armed with new revenues from the expanded VAT, the government has lately returned to a big spending mode, with the additional motivation provided by the elections in the earlier part of the year. As analysis of the data behind the recent 7.5-percent GDP growth would show, it was the 13-percent growth in government consumption spending and the 39-percent jump in gov-

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Cielito F. Habito



ernment construction that was entirely responsible for stimulating growth beyond the more normal 5-6 percent that everyone, including NEDA itself, had expected.

If pump priming works, we should be seeing such surge in government spending push up private consumption and investment spending in turn. Private consumption is in fact being powered enough by still-growing OFW remittances. But so far, the private investment "pump" has refused to be primed, with private investment growth having barely recovered from successive quarterly declines since early 2005. Unfortunately, exports are also sluggish, dampened not only by an appreciating peso

but also by a slowdown in demand abroad—and this is something government pump priming cannot stimulate. We will need more than Keynesian pump priming, then, to get our economy into a more sustained growth at this time, and the answer lies in our producer/investors—and whatever it would take to give them more faith in our economy's future.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

DOTC eyes NBN ...

From page B1

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Makati ...

From page B1

"The bombing would scare foreign funds who have been buying up the market in the past," Vistan added.

In a weekly note to clients, brokerage firm Campos, Lanuza & Co. Inc. said that as a result of the bombing last Friday, stocks of Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), which owns Glorietta mall, could be vulnerable to some negative market reaction.

"Being the main commercial center of ALI, the Ayala Center contributes a significant portion to the company's cash flow. Since earnings are based on lease revenues, there should be no impact to Ayala Center's cash flow. However, with the closure, we expect tenants to ask for concessions for loss of business due to the temporary closure," it said.

"Also, we can expect some reduction in customer traffic in Ayala malls as consumers will likely try to diversify their mall visits," the brokerage firm said.

Analysts also said the market was likely to track movements of the peso this week if it reacts negatively to the mall bombing.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

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5 more Napocor assets to be sold next year

Four geothermal, one diesel plants to be scheduled for bidding

By Abigail L. Ho

ENCOURAGED BY THE GOOD investor response to its offerings in the past few months, Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. has lined up at least five more National Power Corp. assets for auction next year.

These assets, according to PSALM vice president for asset management Froilan Tampinco, are the 685-megawatt (MW) Tiwi-MakBan geothermal plant package in Bicol and Laguna, the 112-MW Tongonan geothermal in Leyte and 220-MW diesel power plant package in Bohol, and the 150-MW Bacon-Manito geother-

mal facility in Sorsogon.

PSALM last week sold the 600-MW Calaca coal-fired power plant to Calaca Holdco Inc., a special purpose company of Belgium's Suez-Tractebel SA, for \$786.53 million.

In July, PSALM was able to sell the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired power plant for \$930 million to Masinloc Power Partners Co. Ltd., the local subsidiary of American firm AES Corp.

Tampinco said PSALM expected potential investors to continue to respond well to other Napocor plants to be offered for sale in the coming months.

He also expressed confidence that

the government would continue to get good bids for the plants.

The sale of the Calaca plant brought the privatization level of Napocor's Luzon and Visayas capacities to 38.64 percent, less than 12 percentage points shy of PSALM's 50-percent privatization target for this year.

The 70-percent privatization level, one of the preconditions for the implementation of retail competition and open access, should be reached by the first half of 2008.

Also, PSALM had sold eight Napocor hydropower facilities—the 3.5-MW Talomo plant in Davao, the 1.6-MW Agusan facility in Bukid-

non, the 1.8-MW Barit plant in Camarines Sur, the 0.4-MW Cawayan plant in Sorsogon, the 1.2-MW Loboc plant in Bohol, the 112-MW Pantabangan-Masiway package in Nueva Ecija and the 360-MW Magat plant in Isabela.

Also lined up for sale this year are the 175-MW Ambuklao-Binga hydropower plant package on Nov. 28 and the 192.5-MW Palipinon geothermal plant and the 146.5-MW Panay diesel-fired power plant package on Dec. 5.

PSALM is also preparing to bid out the 25-year Transco concession on Dec. 12 and the decommissioned 200-MW Manila Thermal Power Plant on Dec. 19.

3 projects get BOI incentives

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS LAST week approved the granting of tax breaks and other incentives to P1.3 billion worth of projects related to mass housing, development of a tourism facility and the export of banana products.

The biggest of these projects is Robinsons Land Corp.'s P671.73-million Woodville Viverde Mansions to be put up in Parañaque City.

BOI data showed that the mass housing project would be composed of four high-rise residential condominium buildings that would be built on a 7.2-hectare land. This project will employ 2,400 workers during construction.

The Mansions would offer 363 mid-cost studio, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units that would sell at a range of P1.8 million to P3 million each. The units would have an average floor area of 45 square meters.

Also approved was the Eskaya Beach Resort Corp.'s P525.48-million resort and spa project in Panglao, Bohol.

The all-Filipino firm, formerly known as Panglao Holiday Beach Resort Corp., would promote the resort as a wellness tourism destination, equipped with an infinity swimming pool with poolside bar, a spa with health and sport gyms, sports facilities, water sports facilities and a shop for scuba divers.

Eskaya's project, which is expected to start commercial operations in January, would have 16 villas that would occupy an 8-hectare land in Panglao.

The resort project is being undertaken as part of a tourism cluster that includes the Panglao Island Tourism Estate and the Panglao Island International Airport.

Also, the project is part of efforts to address the lack of tourist accommodation in Panglao, which experienced a deficit of 358 rooms in 2006 based on industry estimates.

The third project is Sagrex Foods Inc.'s P118.84-million venture which involves the manufacturing of frozen banana fries and microwaveable frozen banana.

Also an all-Filipino firm, Sagrex Foods will export its entire output from the facility in Davao City, which would be able to produce a total of 5,120 metric tons yearly.

Considered nontraditional food products, the banana snacks would be shipped to the Middle East, United States, South Korea and Europe.

The BOI granted this project pioneer status as it would be using the Cardava banana variety, which has never been processed and exported in frozen form.

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PCCI holds 33rd business conference

THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER of Commerce and Industry will hold the 33rd Philippine Business Conference and Expo on Oct. 24-26 at the Manila Hotel.

This year's conference has adopted the theme "One. Global. Filipino. Through Public-Private Partnership."

Francis Chua, PBC chair and special envoy on trade and investment, said the three-day conference would offer valuable insights to participants through panel discussions, case studies, break out sessions and networking with Cabinet members, government officials, top-level business decision-makers, diplomats and thought leaders.

He said the conference, the biggest annual meeting of members of the business community, would be attended by about 1,000 local and foreign delegates.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chair and CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan will deliver the opening address, while Vice President Noli de Castro will be the luncheon speaker on the first day of the PBC.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will be the keynote speaker during the conference's closing day.

As the conference chair, Chua will present to the President the resolutions of the PBC and public-private partnership projects. Samie Lim, PCCI president, will present the PCCI president's report.

Chua said the incoming president of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong, Jonathan K. S. Shum, was scheduled to talk on "The Role of Chambers in Managing Initiatives for Public-Private Partnership."

Discovery chain raising up to P5B for expansion

Company plans to put up hotel in China

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE DISCOVERY CHAIN OF HOTELS of the Tiu family is keen on raising P3 billion-P5 billion most likely through an initial public offering in two years time.

This will enable the company to expand its operations in the country and venture into the competitive hotel market in China.

JTKC Land director for corporate planning John Tiu Jr. said The Discovery Group was considering putting up a hotel in China in 2009.

"Maybe the IPO would take us to further expand. Our main plan is to go to China and we are now in the exploratory stage. It's very competitive (in China) but the market is so huge and it is growing rapidly," Tiu said.

Tiu said the hotel group was also exploring sites in Palawan and Bohol for future hotel projects.

The Discovery Group may spend P2 billion to P3 billion for one 250-room luxury resort hotel.

To take advantage of the growing tourist arrivals and a robust local tourism, the Discovery Group is putting up "Discovery Primea," a six-star high-end residential project on the 4,087-square-meter property formerly occupied by Gilarmi Apartments along Ayala Avenue across Rustan's Makati. Construction of the planned 60-story residential project will start next year.

The Gilarmi service apartments was acquired by the Tiu family from the widowed former beauty queen Armi Kuusela in 1990.

The Tiu family has been involved in hotel development since 1975 when it built Dakota Mansion in Malate. It later put up the Mansion Group of Hotels, a chain of service apartments, hotel and residential suites. Its hotels include Amorsolo Mansion, Mabini Mansion, Boulevard Mansion and Dakota.

The family also owns the Discovery Chain of Hotels, operated by Discovery Leisure Co., which include the 223-room Discovery Suites in Ortigas, the 88-room Discovery Shores in Boracay and Discovery Country Suites Tagaytay.

The Tiu Group, through JTKC Equities, has interests in financial services through iRemit Inc., an overseas money transfer firm, and Sterling Bank of Asia, and in steel manufacturing through listed firm TKC Steel.

Enerfuse keen on small-island grids

By Abigail L. Ho

ENERFUSE HOLDINGS INC., A consortium of new oil players, is looking at venturing beyond the downstream oil industry and crossing over to the power sector by bidding for missionary power grids under National Power Corp.'s Small Power Utilities Group (Spug).

In a recent interview, Flying V chair and chief executive Ramon Villavicencio said the Enerfuse consortium was positioning itself as an end-to-end company engaged in the business of shipping, mining, alternative fuels and power.

To help fulfill this objective, he said the group would be participating in the privatization of Napocor's Spug areas.

"These areas use diesel for power generation, so it will make sense for us to be doing business in these areas," he said.

Napocor is pushing for the accelerated privatization of the missionary power grids under the Spug to

make its operations more viable.

In an earlier interview, Napocor president Cyril del Callar said the state firm had been heavily subsidizing power costs in these Spug.

He said having the private sector step in would help minimize Napocor's costs, as well as reduce the subsidies that other power consumers had to shoulder.

Napocor, he said, was aiming at reducing the missionary power subsidies by at least 30 percent, or P1 billion, a year. This amount could then be channeled to other missionary areas needing electricity.

"The P1 billion in annual savings in missionary subsidies can be used by the Department of Energy to provide electricity to 1,000 isolated barangays under President Macapagal-Arroyo's barangay electrification program," he said.

According to Napocor data, the Spug generates power at an average cost of P14 per kilowatt-hour (kWh). It charges between P4.80 and P5.64 per kWh, or an average of only P5.30 per kWh, in consid-

ation of the standard of living in the 73 Spug areas.

"The difference between our generation costs and selling rates is the subsidy that we provide for these areas, part of which is recovered through the universal levy, amounting to 3.5 centavos per kWh," Del Callar said.

An initial 14 Spug areas were identified for privatization.

Electric cooperatives in these areas have already signed power supply contracts with private power producers, or new power providers, in the islands of Palawan, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Bantayan, Masbate, Catanduanes, Romblon and Tablas.

Next to be auctioned off are power generation contracts for the islands of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Siquijor.

Enerfuse is composed of Flying V, Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc., Seaoil Philippines Inc. and Eastern Petroleum Corp. The consortium is involved primarily in biofuels development.

GG&A Club Shares		SEC License Broker No.: BD-00131
Quotation as of October 22, 2007		
CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,000,000	1,050,000
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,250,000	1,050,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	580,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	280,000
CANLUBANG	440,000	440,000
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	2,100,000	
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	120,000	90,000
CLUB FILIPINO	120,000	90,000
EAGLERIDGE "A"	150,000	
EAGLERIDGE "B"	250,000	200,000
EAGLERIDGE "C"	350,000	
FOREST HILLS "A"	100,000	80,000
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	250,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250,000	220,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	250,000	220,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	20,000,000	
MANILA GOLF (IND)	18,000,000	
MANILA POLO	5,000,000	4,700,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	290,000	250,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	650,000	
MANILA YACHT CLUB	190,000	
MIMOSA (IND)	220,000	
MT. MALABAYAT GOLD "A"	160,000	
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	160,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	280,000	
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	330,000	
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	170,000	140,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	350,000	270,000
SPA & LODGE	500,000	450,000
STA. ELENA "A"	1,900,000	1,700,000
STA. ELENA "B"	1,900,000	1,700,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	280,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	690,000	630,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	650,000	630,000
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	340,000	320,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	90,000
WACK WACK GOLF	240,000	220,000
WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	10,600,000	

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G&W Clubshares		SEC License Broker No.: A-1757
FREE PLAYING RIGHTS AVAILABLE		
As of October 22, 2007		
CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club A/B	1,100,000/1,220,000	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B/C	280,000/300,000	250,000/280,000
Baguio Country Club	Pis. Call	560,000
Camp John Hay	Pis. Call	230,000
Canlubang Golf	Pis. Call	500,000
Canyon Woods	Pis. Call	90,000
Club Filipino	Pis. Call	180,000
Eagleridge B/C	250,000/250,000	200,000
Eagleridge A/B	90,000/180,000/200,000	50,000
Forest Hills A/B/C	300,000	Pis. Call
Luisita Golf A	21,000,000	20,000,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pis. Call	18,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pis. Call	5,000,000
Manila Polo	300,000/300,000	250,000
Manila Southwoods A/B	Pis. Call	180,000
Makati Sports Club A/B	Pis. Call	200,000
Metropolitan Club A/B	Pis. Call	150,000
Mimosa C1/C2/C3	220,000/150,000	150,000/280,000
MT. Malabayat A	170,000/250,000/280,000	Pis. Call
Orchard A/B/C	Pis. Call	Pis. Call
Punta Fuego	Pis. Call	120,000
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	130,000/150,000
Riviera Golf A/B/C	150,000/250,000	130,000/150,000
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pis. Call	270,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	Pis. Call	55,000
Sherwood A/B/C	70,000/130,000	100,000
Splendid Tait	200,000	Pis. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B	2,100,000	1,600,000
The Palms Country Club	340,000	300,000
Tagaytay Country Club	290,000	250,000
Tagaytay Highlands	690,000	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	670,000	630,000
Valley Golf	250,000	210,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	80,000
Wack Wack Golf	9,500,000	

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Gov't revives ...

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set aside around 10 percent of their earnings for investments. The bonds are also proposed to be denominated in US dollars.

Asked whether the OFW bond float would help the BSP's mopping up of excess liquidity in the financial system, Amador said it would depend on whether the bonds would attract inflows on top of what is already being remitted to the country.

But for 2008, she said the BSP was "conservatively" projecting a much slower 5-percent growth in remittances coursing through the banking system from the 15-percent average growth seen in the first eight months of the year.

Amador said 95 percent of total remittances—a large portion of which was being coursed through the informal channels in previous years—have now been captured by the banking system.

Two to three years ago, as high as 30 percent of total flows went through informal or unregulated channels.

Based on an internal study by the BSP on remittances, the challenge on this phenomenon was

not so much the large flows coming in but in directing these private flows toward productive activities.

"While these are private transfers, the government can ensure that the policy environment is conducive to the use of these remittances for investments in productive activities such as entrepreneurial endeavors and investment in better healthcare, education and housing for the families of remitters," the BSP study said.

Contrary to the common belief that remittances flow in abundance whether in good times or bad, the BSP study also suggested that prospects on the domestic economy and the peso-dollar movement now influence overseas Filipinos' appetite to send money even more than the sheer commitment to help families back home.

"Policymakers should therefore not be drawn into complacency that remittances can comfortably help the economy weather economic downturns. There is no substitute for prudent macroeconomic policies," the study said.

Maybank		Currencies	
Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.699692	1.000000
Japan	Yen	0.006052	0.008649
United Kingdom	Pound	1.430241	2.044100
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.090276	0.129022
Switzerland	Franc	0.598181	0.854920
Canada	Dollar	0.718591	1.027010
Singapore	Dollar	0.479143	0.684791
Australia	Dollar	0.624669	0.892777
Bahrain	Dinar	1.856637	2.653505
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.187184	0.267523
Brunei	Dollar	0.477508	0.682454
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000077	0.000110
Thailand	Baht	0.022202	0.031731
UAE	Dirham	0.190595	0.272398
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.429200
Korea	Won	0.000762	0.001089
China	Yuan	0.093154	0.133136
Denmark	Kroner	0.134195	0.191791
India	Ruppee	0.017709	0.025310
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.208056	0.297354
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525768	0.751428
Sweden	Kroner	0.109125	0.155962
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021465	0.030678

Sources: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Oct. 18, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen
** Asian time closing rate as of Oct. 18, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE															
(As of October 19, 2007)															
52-WEEK HIGH		52-WEEK LOW		STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME						
BANKS															
17.5	5.7			Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	9.2	9.2	9	9		105,000					
73	40.5			Banko de Oro-EPCI Inc.	64	64.5	64	64.5		1,281,400					
73.5	53			Bank of the Philippine Islands	67.5	69.5	67.5	68.5		2,135,100					
748	528			China Banking Corp.	715	725	715	725		870					
23.5	18.5			Citibank Savings Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25		300					
0.63	0.36			Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.45		2,250,000					
75.5				Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	65	65	64	64.5		3,471,200					
65.5	34			Philippine National Bank	50.5	51	49.5	50		1,693,200					
68	42			Philippine Savings Bank	62	62.5	62	62.5		4,000					
56.5	43			Philippine Trust Co.	56.5	56.5	56.5	56.5		1,000					
39.57	15.22			Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	29.5	30	29	30		1,764,500					
90	54.5			Security Bank Corp.	78	78	77.5	78		162,600					
66	44.51			Union Bank of the Philippines	51.5	51.5	51	51.5		230,000					
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS															
2.22	0.6			Bankard Inc.	2.02	2.04	2	2.04		3,440,000					
16.25	4.35			CitiseOnline.com Inc.	12.5	13.5	12.5	13.25		850,600					
1.6	0.4			First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1		300,000					
42.5	29			First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42		500					
5.9	5.3			I-Remit Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.5		7,211,000					
1,885.00	1,560.00			Manulife Financial Corp.	1,875.00	1,880.00	1,875.00	1,880.00		980					
5	2.95			National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.6		1,974,000					
3.1	1.1			PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.94	2	1.94	2		39,000					
1,130.00	240			The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,050.00	1,050.00	1,040.00	1,040.00		2,690					
1.94	1.3			Union Bank of the Philippines	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6		283,000					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER															
6.2	3.8			Abotit Power Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6		7,171,000					
70.5	49			First Gen Corp.	66	66	65.5	66		983,700					
92	50.5			First Phil. Holdings Corp.	87	88	87	87.5		491,000					
17.5	8.8			Manila Water Co. Inc.	17.25	17.5	16.75	17		3,815,900					
105.45	23.18			Manila Electric Co.	80.5	82.5	80.5	80.5		1,731,300					
7.8	4.1			PNOC Energy Development Corp.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.3		13,687,000					
6.8	3.9			Petron Corp.	6.4	6.8	6.4	6.7		23,044,000					
14.75	6.6			Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2		304,000					
2.5	1.7			Salcon Power Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4		18,000					
1.9	0.99			Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.34	1.52	1.34	1.44		9,454,000					
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO															
6.3	3.2			Alaska Milk Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2		171,000					
2.95	1.66			Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.94	1.96	1.86	1.86		543,000					
2.4	1.08			CADP Group Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.78	1.8		44,000					
61	39			Jollibee Foods Corp.	53.5	53.5	53.5	53.5		502,300					
9.1	5.3			Pancake House Inc.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5		35,000					
0.98	0.5			RFM Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.79	0.79		210,000					
3.85	2.06			Roxas Holdings	2.95	2.95	2.8	2.8		575,000					
80	59			San Miguel Corp. "A"	60	60	59.5	60		60,900					
88	59.5			San Miguel Corp. "B"	61.5	62	61.5	61.5		72,100					
2	5.5			Tanday Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	5.8	6		161,000					
22	15			Universal Robina Corp.	15	15.25	15	15.25		2,145,300					
0.55	0.26			Vatrich Corp.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.41		67,000					
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES															
6.1	2.59			EEl Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.5		5,133,000					
9.2	4.95			Hotelm Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.4		5,397,000					
7	2.1			Republic Cement Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.45	4.5		33,000					
2	0.42			Southwest Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.2	1.14	1.14		24,976,000					
CHEMICALS															
6.3	3.75			Chemrey Textiles Inc.	4.65	4.8	4.6	4.75		855,000					
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS															
0.75	0.17			Pump Resources Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42		2,240,000					
HOLDING FIRMS															
3.9	2.46			A. Sonano Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.25		38,000					
0.17	0.03			AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.12	0.12		17,380,000					
1.28	0.235			APC Group Inc.	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.81		3,490,000					
3.65	1.5			ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	3	3.05	2.95	3.05		981,000					
0.018	0.0075			Abacus Cons. Res. and Holdings Inc. "A"	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011		113,700,000					
9.7	5.6			Abotit Equity Ventures Inc.	7.1	7.2	7.1	7.2		794,000					
0.021	0.0075			Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017		94,000,000					
1.38	0.54			Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.8	6	5.7	6		19,408,000					
2.9	0.89			Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.87	0.87		400,000					
615	397.92			Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.24	2.26	2.22	2.22		1,393,000					
15.25	7.22			Anglo Corp.	575	585	575	580		184,920					
5.8	1.38			Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5		18,851,000					
10.25	4.35			Bencres Holdings Corp.	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.65		2,639,000					
6.9	1.08			DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.6	9.7	9.6	9.6		5,722,000					
2.5	0.7			Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5		72,000					
8	2.55			F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		3,000					
14.5	7.3			Fininvest Development Corp.	6.9	7	6.9	7		314,000					
11.5	1.48			JG Summit Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	11	11		681,900					
0.28	0.011			Minerales Industries Corp.	8.2	8.3	7.8	8		5,978,000					
1.54	0.72			Pacific Inc. "A"	0.22	0.225	0.205	0.205		127,520,000					
0.75	0.185			Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75		200,000					
2.1	1.2			Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48		1,730,000					
452.5	256.55			Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64		155,000					
1.06	0.61			SM Investments Corp.	397.5	397.5	390	395		517,900					
0.73	0.13			Seafrost Resources Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3		51,000					
1.06	0.61			Sinophill Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.45		5,740,000					
23	1			Solid Group Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76		20,000					
0.75	0.1			South China Resources Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48		9,000					
2.34	1			TKC Steel Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25		7,600					
8.9	5			Wolvin Industries Inc.	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.38		4,950,000					
PROPERTY															
2.34	1			A Brown Co. Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.38		119,000					
19.25	11.67			Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.6	7.8		31,000					
1.88	1			Ayala Land Inc.	16.75	17.25	16.75	17		17,568,800					
2.04	1.56			Belle Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.36	1.4		2,848,000					
2.7	1.18			Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.05	4.4	4.05	4.4		566,000					
0.86	0.36			Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp. "A"	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94		100,000					
0.83	0.24			Cityland Development Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92		50,000					
0.99	0.52			Crown Equities Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.63	0.63		500,000					
0.47	0.055			Cyber Bay Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47		1,580,000					
1.48	0.61			Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.82	0.8	0.81		24,570,000					
2.44	1.26			Ever Gotesco Resources and Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29		1,350,000					
0.49	0.11			Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.14	1.18	1.12	1.16		13,354,000					
3.3	2.16			Fininvest Land Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.9	1.92		43,472,000					
1.12	0.31			Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3		630,000					
4.6	1.85			Highlands Prime Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5		50,000					
6.4	1.5			MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.64	0.64		980,000					
0.7	0.125			Megaworld Corp.	4.25	4.6	4.25	4.5		110,450,000					
0.87	0.32			Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	5.1	5.2	5	5		123,000					
23	13			Phil. Estates Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.34	0.39		720,000					
13.5	6.72			Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.53	0.56	0.51	0.53		7,410,000					
3.25	1.2			Robinson Land Corp.	21.75	21.75	21.25	21.25		1,827,200					
0.49	0.11			SM Development Corp.	4.2	4.3	4.15	4.3		1,433,000					
1.34	0.46			SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75		6,796,600					
0.49	0.09			Shang Properties Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4		281,000					
7.5	3.65			Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69		150,000					
				United Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28		3,790,000					
				Vista Land and Developments Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8		23,928,000					
MEDIA															
38.5	18.5			ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31	33	31	33		354,800					
11.75	8.4			GMA Network Inc.	8.5	8.6	8.4	8.6		1,060,000					
1.14	0.9			Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1	1	1	1		80,000					
TELECOMMUNICATIONS															
2.12	1.1			Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.52		1,764,000					
1,740.00	1,085.00			Globe Telecom Inc.	1,720.00	1,735.00	1,720.00	1,730.00		24,820					
3,285.00	2,210.00			Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,025.00	3,130.00	3,025.00	3,110.00		209,680					
8.1	4.7			Philippine Telephone Corp.	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.7		4,508,000					
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY															
0.39	0.17			Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.22		5,910,000					
12	2			Diversified Financial Network Inc.	9	9.4	9	9.2		460,000					
11.5	2			IPVG Corp.	9.3	9.3	9	9.2		755,000					
0.065	0.027			ISM Communications Corp.	0.043	0.045	0.043	0.043		91,800,000					
29.5	8.48			Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5		7,000					
0.32	0.044			Ionics Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8		1,000					
2.08	1.1			Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205		2,560,000					
0.0725	0.03			Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.46	1.46		80,000					
5.8	1.34			PhilWeb Corp Inc.	0.055	0.0575	0.0525	0.0575		43,700,000					

Eyeing expansion, Sun Life to take on bancassurance

Insurer to open, upgrade links with RP banks

By Doris C. Dumlaog

SUN LIFE FINANCIAL PHILIPPINES IS SET to venture into local bancassurance in order to expand the distribution channel for its insurance products and mutual funds.

SLFP treasury director Cesar Zampaga told reporters on Friday that the company had recently beefed up its bancassurance team to explore opportunities in this area, including the possible upgrading of its existing partnership with Standard Chartered Bank.

"This will address our need to expand that type of arrangement, not only with SCB, but with other institutions in the future," Zampaga said.

Bancassurance is the selling of life insurance products to bank clients. But in the Philippines, a bank is only allowed to sell life insurance products of its banking affiliate. This means that a bank has to own 5 percent of an insurance firm before it can sell any policy. A bank is also allowed to have one bancassurance partner.

To date, Sun Life's tie-up with SCB involves only distribution. Under this arrangement, SLFP is allowed to use the British bank's database to market its products and, for every sale concluded, the insurer pays a referral fee to the bank. Also, SLFP has a co-branded credit card product with SCB.

But while SLFP may enter into a bancassurance arrangement with only one bank, the insurer still have other options, such as in the distribution of its mutual funds, he said.

"It depends on the type of arrangement we'll get into," Zampaga said. "It might not be a full-blown bancassurance. It may be a broker type of relationship."

For instance, he noted, foreign banks like SCB and HSBC have existing brokerage businesses which may open up fresh opportunities for SLFP without necessarily restricting itself to one bancassurance partner.

"We recognize the advantage of a full-blown partnership," he said. "But as we see our own clientele, which comes from the AB market, we have to take advantage of synergies with some of the foreign banks."

A local partnership with HSBC—which is a stiff competitor of the Sun Life group in other markets like Hong Kong—has given SLFP substantial business in mutual funds.

SLFP makes available its array of mutual funds to HSBC's wealth management clients

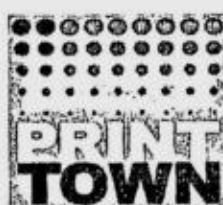
and the arrangement has proven to be a success, he said.

"We hope to multiply that with other financial institutions that have the distribution channel," Zampaga said.

On Friday, SLFP also launched a pioneering tie-up with Bank of the Philippine Islands on cash remittances.

Although SLFP can not team up with BPI on bancassurance, since the Ayala group has its own life insurance company, the insurer instead has tapped the bank's remittance platform for overseas workers for its own domestic payment requirements. It was the first time BPI had allowed its local remittance network to be used by another financial institution.

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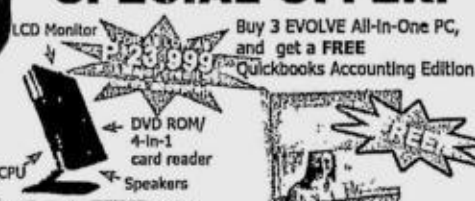
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DA puts up food terminals in rural towns

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has started putting up barangay food terminals and "bagsakan," or drop-off, centers in the provinces, which are expected to initially benefit some 2 million consumers in the rural areas.

"We are extending these centers outside Metro Manila and into the provinces to expand the access of ordinary rural consumers to high quality, but more affordable, goods," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

Together with the local governments, the DA had earlier set up BFTs across Metro Manila to sell basic food items, like rice and vegetables, at prices up to 12 percent cheaper than those sold in regular retail outlets.

Bagsakan centers meanwhile, provide farmers with direct access to wet markets and consumers.

This link would eliminate unnecessary deals with traders and middlemen, which tend to jack up prices of agriculture produce, reducing the profit margin of small farmers and fisherfolk.

As of this month, Yap said, 21 BFTs and 9 bagsakan centers have been set up in Metro Manila—in Quezon City, Manila, Taguig, Bulacan and Caloocan—benefiting over 410,703 families.

These BFTs are partly funded by the Japan Grant Assistance for Underprivileged Farmers, also known as the 2KR (Kennedy Round) grant, which aims to promote the welfare of Filipino farmers living below the poverty line.

According to Yap, the DA hopes to set up 43 more of these consumer-friendly terminals in the second half of 2007 in Mega Manila and in the provinces.

To round up its planned BFTs for the year, Yap said the DA will also set up food terminals in the country's economic zones, such as the First Cavite Industrial Estate, Clark Special Economic Zone, Cavite Export Processing Zone, and the Laguna Technopark.

The program also involves the provision of special routes as food lanes, and the use of cold storage facilities in strategic locations to better preserve perishable farm produce.

These centers, Yap said, can help the DA attain its goal to boost agricultural harvests and increase annual growth from the current average of 3 to 4 percent to at least 5 to 6 percent for the next decade.

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Bears prowl Wall Street as jitters grow

Market awaits release of economic reports, earnings of key companies

NEW YORK—A HORRIFIC WEEK ON Wall Street has put the bears in command as the market braces for more bleak news from the US housing front and earnings that may show how companies are weathering the storm.

In the week ended Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted 4.05 percent to 13,522.02 as the blue-chip index retreated from its highs of Oct. 9 above 14,000 points.

The broad market Standard & Poor's 500 index sank 3.92 percent to 1,500.63 and the tech-heavy Nasdaq tumbled 2.87 percent to 2,725.16.

The stock market was roiled over the past week by weaker-than-expected data from the struggling real estate sector, with new housing starting sliding to a 14-year low, and earnings reports from the financial sector that show the troubles spreading.

A struggling dollar and record high oil prices have also hurt sentiment.

Mary Ann Hurley said crude oil's jump above \$90 is worrisome for the outlook.

"The rise in oil and gasoline prices has traditionally acted as a tax on the consumer," she said.

"Consumers have already started reducing their demand for oil due to higher prices, an apparent softening of the labor market, tightening of loan standards and the deteriorating housing and credit market sectors." Analysts say reports Wednesday on existing home sales and Thursday on new home sales will show further declines in a market that some say is showing its worst declines in decades.

"The housing sector continues to slide, imparting downside risk to our

already sub-trend forecast for economic growth," said Deutsche Bank analysts Joseph LaVorgna and Carl Riccadonna.

The analysts said the problems may spread further to the financial sector and that reduced construction activity will mean higher unemployment and as a consequence, lower consumer spending.

This week, Wall Street will see in addition to the economic reports the quarterly results from Apple, Boeing, Merrill Lynch and Microsoft, among others. Many will be looking at forward guidance from the companies instead of the backward-looking profit figures.

The ray of hope for Wall Street is that many expect the Federal Reserve to jump into action with another rate cut later this month. The central bank

already trimmed its base rate by a half-point in September to ease stress in housing and credit markets.

"Odds of a 25 basis-point reduction in the funds rate jumped to 92 percent Friday from 24 percent Monday," said a report from Thomson IFR Markets.

"We do not see so much weakness in the domestic economy (especially ex-housing), but the Fed must placate real fears that there are more cadavers in the banking sector and that uncertainty will snatch more from potential growth."

Bond prices rallied in the past week as investors flocked to safety. The yield on the 10-year Treasury bond slid to 4.401 percent from 4.687 percent a week earlier, and that on the 30-year Treasury dropped to 4.689 percent from 4.905 percent. **AFP**

Finance heads grapple with credit crisis

WASHINGTON—FACED WITH SOARING oil prices, a falling dollar and the worst credit crisis in nearly a decade, the masters of global finance have a simple message for jittery markets: Be calm, we are keeping an eye on things.

It probably did not help, however, that the new assurances came exactly 20 years from the date of the worst market meltdown in... history.

The meeting of finance leaders from the Group of Seven industrial countries coincided with the anniversary of "Black Monday," Oct. 19, 1987, when the Dow Jones industrial average plunged by 22.6 percent, its biggest one-day percentage loss ever.

While US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and their G-7 counterparts did not dwell on those long-ago events during their discussions Friday, the anniversary served as an eerie reminder that the global economy does not always perform as its handlers wish that it would.

It did not help that while the policymakers were holding their discussions in Treasury's ornate Cash Room, the Dow Jones industrial average was plunging by 366.94 points, or 2.64 percent. It was the third-biggest point drop this year and reflected in part oil prices that momentarily climbed to a new record, above \$90 per barrel.

The problems this year came to a boil when credit markets essentially froze on Aug. 9 as fear overwhelmed many investors.

Troubles that began in the market for subprime mortgages have spread to many other kinds of debt. The credit crunch has been similar in intensity to the crisis that hit the global economy in August 1998 after Russia devalued the ruble.

Paulson, speaking to reporters after Friday's meeting, said the G-7 officials are watching market developments closely.

However, in their joint statement of goals, the officials essentially reshaped previous bland assurances about cooperation in such areas as limiting volatility in currency markets. Absent were any examples of where big differences in approach had been resolved. **AP**

WB to return emphasis to agriculture

WASHINGTON—IF THE WORLD IS COMMITTED to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable economic growth, the powers of using agriculture for development must be unleashed, the World Bank said.

Promoting agriculture, the bank said in its World Development Report, is essential for meeting the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty and hunger by half by 2015 and continuing to do so for several decades thereafter.

"A dynamic 'agriculture for development agenda' can benefit the estimated 900 million rural people in the developing world who live on less than \$1 (euro.70) a day, most of whom are engaged in agriculture," said Robert Zoellick, the bank's new president.

"We need to give agriculture more prominence across the board," he said Friday.

Last week in a speech outlining his strategy for the bank after 100 days in office, Zoellick said economic growth from agriculture benefits the poorest countries four times more than growth in other sectors of an economy.

"We need a 21st Century Green Revolution designed for the special and diverse needs of Africa," he said, "sparked by greater investment in technological research and dissemination, sustainable land management, agricultural supply chains and policies that strengthen market opportunities."

The report, titled "Agriculture for Development," said the rich countries need to reform policies that harm the poor.

For example, it is vital that the United States reduce cotton subsidies, which depress prices for African farmers.

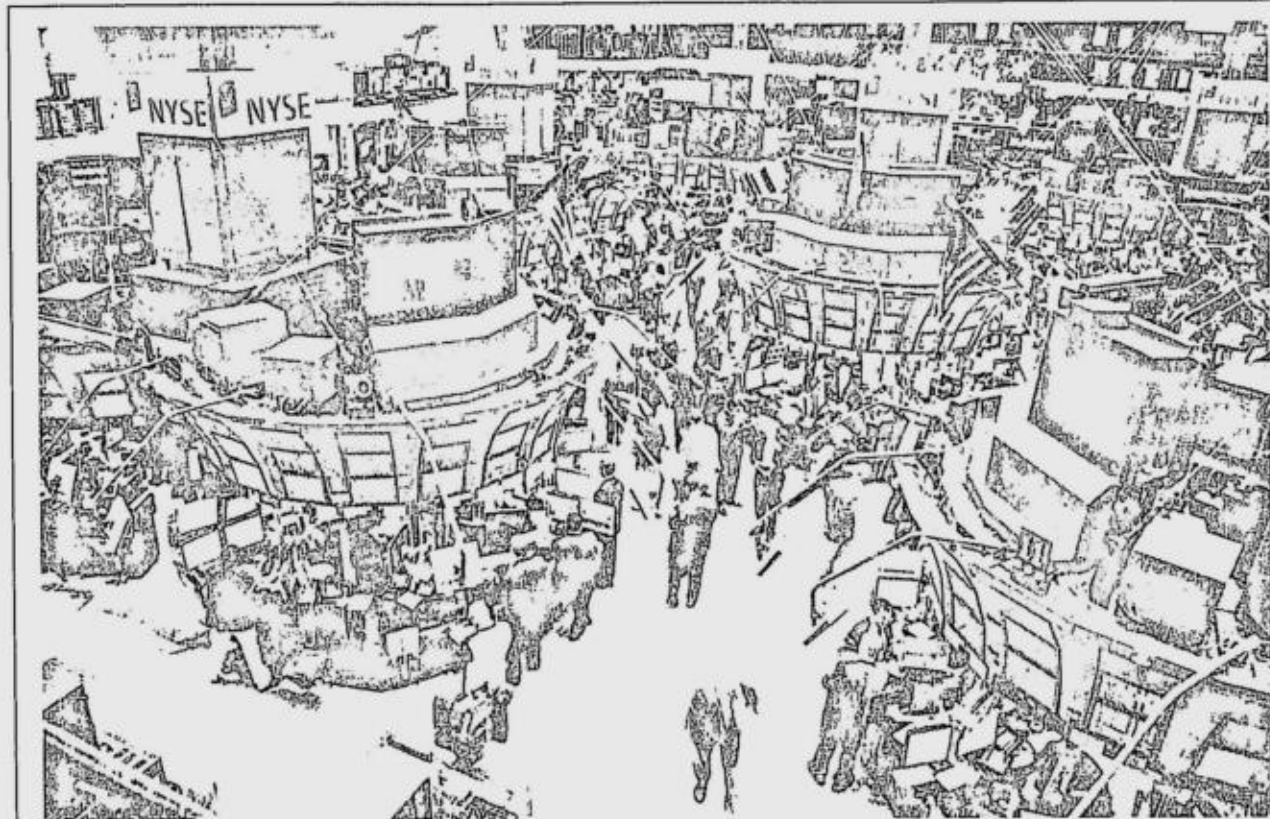
In the emerging area of biofuels, the report said, the problem is both restrictive tariffs and heavy subsidies in rich countries, which drive up food prices and limit export opportunities for efficient developing countries.

The report also asserts that industrialized countries that were the major contributors to global warming urgently need to do more to help poor farmers adapt their production systems to climate change.

The bank identifies agriculture's contribution to rural people in three types of societies: Agriculture-based countries, transforming countries and urbanized countries.

In agricultural-based countries, the agricultural sector is essential to overall growth, poverty reduction and food security. Most of these countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa, where agriculture employs 62 percent of the population and generates 32 percent of gross domestic product growth.

The bank said that while 75 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas, only 4 percent of government foreign aid goes to agriculture in developing countries. **AP**



TRADERS work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Caterpillar Inc.'s warning that the housing slump was infecting the economy sent US stocks tumbling last Friday by the most in more than two months, in a drop that was made more unnerving as it marked the 20th anniversary of the 1987 crash. The Dow fell nearly 367 points after Caterpillar, the world's top maker of construction equipment, said the US economy will be "near to, or even in, recession" next year. **REUTERS**

UOB raises RP growth projection to 5.6% in 2007

By Michelle V. Remo

UNITED OVERSEAS BANK HAS raised its growth projection for the Philippine economy this year to 5.6 percent from 4.9 percent due to the country's "better-than-expected" performance in the first half.

In a paper on the Philippines, the economics-treasury research group of UOB said remittances from overseas Filipino workers would remain strong

for the rest of the year. This will support increase in consumption and therefore higher growth.

"After some moderation in the fourth quarter 2006 growth, the Philippine economy came back with a vengeance ... Growth was supported by the usual suspects: Robust private spending, services sector contribution and export demand," UOB said in the paper.

In the first half, the economy grew by 7.3 percent, its highest in more

than two decades.

The growth was much higher than what many economists, including those from government, expected.

The robust growth had prompted the administration's economic managers to declare that the Philippine economy was on a roll, and that the country was no longer a laggard in Asia.

But UOB said the over 7-percent growth in the first half was not likely to be repeated in the second semester.

The bank said the economy could grow by a maximum 5.6 percent this year.

"So while the country has enjoyed an impressive first-quarter (and second quarter), we do not expect (that level of) growth to be sustained for the rest of the year, chiefly because government consumption would retreat while exports are likely to moderate on slower demand from global markets," UOB said.

NiHao, BHP Billiton unit ink mining deal

By Amy R. Remo

LISTED FIRM NIHAO MINERAL Resources International Inc. has forged an agreement last week with QNI Phils. Inc., the local subsidiary of BHP Billiton Ltd., to explore for nickel in Zambales.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, NiHao said the memorandum of agreement covers its Botolan nickel prospect in Zambales.

NiHao's Botolan asset covers two parcels of land - both of which lie between the Botolan and Iba towns of Zambales.

Zambales, traditionally known for its chromite mines, also hosts abundant nickel laterite resources.

Nickel is very much in demand

in the world market as it is a vital ingredient in steel manufacturing.

Under the agreement, NiHao will conduct a preliminary exploration and drilling program on the property, while BHP Billiton will provide technical expertise and advice through a joint exploration management committee.

According to the disclosure, NiHao will shoulder "all exploration expenses during this period and will be responsible for all legal and regulatory aspects covering the property."

The disclosure also stated that the MOA contains the commercial terms for the offtake agreement, at BHP's option, between NiHao and BHP's Yabulu nickel refinery in Queensland, Australia.

BHP Billiton is the world's largest diversified resources company. Its Yabulu refinery in Queensland is one of the world's biggest nickel processing facilities.

The offtake agreement for NiHao's nickel property, the disclosure said, "will take effect once the exploration and drilling program is concluded and will extend for a period of five years."

Under this agreement, NiHao will deliver 500,000 wet metric tonnes of nickel ore annually, and will be sold based on London Metal Exchange prices.

Also, NiHao and BHP signed on the same day a confidentiality agreement, which provides that both parties are not allowed to disclose any privileged information to third parties.

DENR suspends tree-cutting permits

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL Resources Secretary Lito Atienza has suspended tree-cutting permits extended to small-scale mining companies and individuals.

Atienza issued the order after suspending the tree-cutting permits issued to three small-scale mining companies in Sibuyan Island, Romblon.

"Small-scale mining should only involve the use of tools like picks, hammers and shovels. Heavy equipment should not be utilized and, as such, should not involve the cutting down of trees," Atienza said in a statement.

The decision came in the aftermath of the killing of Sibuyan councilor and environmental activist Armin Marin.

Marin was shot dead while leading a protest against a nickel exploration project.

"The tragic incident compelled us to look at the situation in Sibuyan. We found out that part of the small-scale mining permits issued there was the go-signal to cut trees," Atienza said.

These permits had allegedly allowed small-scale mining companies in Sibuyan to cut down around 70,000 trees.

Atienza likewise questioned an earlier argument, which claimed that the tree-cutting permit was given to allow for road construction.

"Why would trucks be allowed to haul iron ores when small-scale mining should not involve the use of machines and heavy equipment in the first place?" he said.

Atienza said small-scale mining was just meant to provide livelihood opportunities to the poor.

"It is not intended to line the pockets of wealthy financiers who, in masquerading as small miners, are not only shortchanging the government [but also] the community," he said. **Amy R. Remo**

Ford considers RP hub expansion, cites concerns

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORD MOTOR CO., WHOSE OFFICIALS have expressed continued optimism in the Philippines, could expand its production facility here by up to seven times if local economic growth continued and regional integration opened up more markets in Southeast Asia.

Liam Benham, Ford's vice president for governmental affairs in Asia-Pacific and Africa, said the company was continually looking at expansion opportunities in the country although there were no short-term plans so far.

"Ideally, a facility should be producing 100,000 units to 200,000 units yearly," Benham said.

"This is a possible future for (our

Philippine operations) as the Asean market is still largely untapped, but we have to make a competitive situation to make that a feasible reality," he added.

Ford's facility in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, has the capacity to turn out some 31,000 units of vehicles yearly, but it is only producing barely half of that.

Benham was part of a business mission sent by the US-Asean Business Council. It was here on a three-day visit that wrapped up Friday.

The Bangkok-based official said the business mission met with various executive officials, including President Macapagal-Arroyo, and business-related bodies such as the National Competitiveness Council.

"It is heartening to hear that there are deeply-rooted efforts to make the

country more competitive," Benham said. "It is more so when one considers that Ford enjoys (some conveniences here) that are unparalleled in Asean."

However, he said that amid continued optimism, the need to address hurdles to growth and expansion remained urgent.

He said two of the greatest concerns among investors in the Philippines were the problems of smuggling and high cost of power.

Further, Benham said the strict implementation of the ban on the importation of used vehicles was needed as this was the biggest barrier to the expansion of the domestic vehicle market.

Benham said Ford was also anticipating the opening up of markets in the

region with the realization of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Economic Community.

"Non-tariff barriers in Malaysia and the tax system in Thailand are currently discouraging Ford from exporting more vehicles to these countries," he said.

Benham echoed US-ABC president Matthew P. Daley, who expressed hope that "economic integration, in tangible and practicable ways, could be accelerated."

"We are fully committed to the Philippines, which is a very key hub for Ford in the Asian region," Benham said.

"We export not only to Asean but to farther regions as well. We have started shipping out flex-fuel engines to as far as South Africa, which is 12 hours by plane," he added.

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Flat screened TVs are in

Text and photos
by Charles E. Buban

FLAT SCREEN TELEVISIONS have become the preferred TV choice for virtually any home.

And who would not want one? With improved designs and built-in advantages, such as wider viewing angles (that make them easier to view from multiple areas around the room), buying a flat screen TV makes perfect sense.

Even the traditional cathode ray tube, or CRT TVs, now employ flat screen technology to offer features that could rival its more advanced cousin, the liquid crystal display TVs.

This is why even LCD-TV giant Sharp has updated its CRT TV models, unveiling its newest lineup of pure flat TVs for the Philippine market.

Not yet out

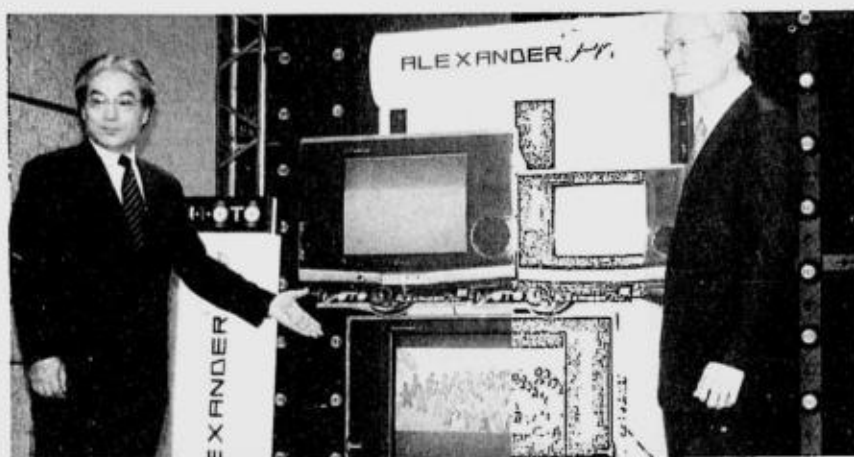
Called the Alexander series, this new generation proves that CRT TVs are not yet out of the living room.

"With Sharp's Alexander series, Filipino consumers now have a chance to enjoy much better TV pictures, brighter pixels, better contrast ratios between light and dark, and faster response times (in showing motion images)," assured Sharp (Phils.) Corp. president and GM Kenji Okunaka.

Apart from giving LCDs and plasma a serious challenge in the visual department, Okunaka added that the Alexander series also features Sharp's proprietary Big Sound technology that guarantees clear, high quality sound reproduction courtesy of a four-speaker system with Bass Reflection Speaker Box.

Raise the bar

"With this technology, expect the Alexander series to raise the bar in sound fidelity and draw an enthusiastic response from people looking for a new TV that not only looks great but sounds excellently as well," he said.



SHARP (Phils) Corp.'s Okunaka is joined by Sharp Corp. CEO of Asian operations Makoto Takahashi in presenting the Alexander series of flat screen CRT TVs.

The Alexander series will be available in two variants, the Great Alexander and Alexander Pro, which come in 21- and 29-inch models. The 29-inch variant features surround sound, sound/video modes, 16:9 mode, on/off timer, reminder on screen timer, beep reminder and even a child lock.

But while the company is banking on the Alexander series to further strengthen its position in the CRT TV market, Sharp is expecting an increased demand for LCD TV.

Sharp's line of LCD TVs currently account for about 10 percent of the market and Okunaka believes that, with the new models it has recently introduced, demand will further increase.

Recent Aquos series editions

Sharp's flagship Aquos LCD TV line recently added the A83 and A53 models, which are slimmer and lighter than its predecessors, not to mention that they are much better suited for the forthcoming high-definition TV, and multimedia revolution.

The Sharp Aquos A83 represents a technological breakthrough as it offers a high frame rate of 100-

Hz/120-Hz on a full high-definition TV.

This means viewers can experience all the pleasures of a Full HDTV experience, and still enjoy smooth images and flicker-free analogue videos.

Sharp explained that this is a result of Sharp's Fine Motion Advanced Technology, which uses a unique algorithm to create intermediary frames and double the number of frames-per-second on conventional video. This, in turn, increases the frame rate from 50/60 to 100/120, giving analog video the smooth, flicker-free experience on the A83 and even in the A53 models.

This technology also ensures that high-speed moving visuals like sports scenes and scrolling text will remain distinct and clear.

SHARP'S new Aquos A83 (shown), as well as A53 series deliver enhanced audio as well as blur-free visuals.



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HTC connects with 'ultimate mobile handset'

By Riza T. Olchondra

SEEKING TO CONNECT WITH local business users, HTC Corp. has introduced a handset that packs Windows Mobile 6 functionality with Blackberry services and 3.5G connectivity anywhere in the world.

This handset, the HTC TyTN II, provides a complete suite of business applications, including Word Mobile, Excel Mobile, PowerPoint Mobile, contacts, calendar, push e-mail, notes, tasks, PDF viewer and more.

In addition, HTC has included further applications such as a business card scanner and Mapping R12 that uses the built-in GPS for personal navigation.

For Internet use, the HTC TyTN II can get users connected in any country with global high-speed HSDPA or 3.5G connectivity, tri-band UMTS, quad-band EDGE, and WiFi 802.11b/g. These ensure that users can enjoy high-speed surfing, uploading and downloading while roaming anywhere in the world.

HTC also bundled in BlackBerry(R) Connect™ 4.0 for Microsoft(R) Windows Mobile(R). The application allows the user to leverage on the benefits of

BlackBerry(R) wireless services, including BlackBerry(R) Enterprise Server and BlackBerry(R) Internet Service. TyTN II users can seamlessly connect with e-mail and other data applications and enjoy a powerful Windows(R) user experience.

Great Internet connection is not so enjoyable without a large screen, so HTC built a 2.8-inch color screen with an innovative adjustable screen angle. The screen slides back to reveal a full QWERTY keyboard, then tilts up to position the screen perfectly for reading and creating e-mails, using applications, or even just playing videos and games.

HTC Home™, HTC's new homescreen, offers easy access to photo dialing, text messages, calendar entries, e-mails and contacts, as well as one touch access to live weather conditions plus four-day forecasts.

"The launch of the HTC TyTN II is all about fast, easy access on the move to the kind of features and connectivity previously reserved for the PC world," HTC Asia vice-president Jack Tong said in an emailed statement.

"This phone is a perfect match for mobile professionals and advanced mobile consumers on the go, who can now benefit from the powerful feature set that the HTC TyTN II offers, and the true high-speed mobile access the mobile operators are now offering."



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BMHI

BCDA Management and Holdings, Inc.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BCDA Management & Holdings, Inc. (BMHI) invites interested contractors to submit application for eligibility and if found eligible to bid subsequently for the project stated below:

Contract Package Name and Location	Scope of Works	IAC Category and Classification	PCAB License Category	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)/Source of Funds	Project Duration
Repair of Roof Eaves and Repainting of Exterior Walls and Interior Walls of Common Areas of 42 Buildings Administered by BMHI for NAPOLCOM-PNP	Repair of Roof Eaves and Repainting of Exterior Walls and Interior Walls of Common Areas of 42 Buildings (MB01 to MB21, MB23 to MB34 and MC20 to MC28) Administered by BMHI for NAPOLCOM-PNP	At least medium "A" with an allowable range of contract cost above P5M up to P25M	At least category "B"	P11,687,000.00 NAPOLCOM Special Account Fund	180 Calendar days

Prospective contractors should have completed a similar contract for the above-mentioned project.

Application for eligibility (legal, technical and financial documents and statements) shall be evaluated using the "PASS/FAIL" criteria set forth in the Instructions to Applicants for Eligibility and to Bid. Only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by BMHI to participate in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the ABC shall be evaluated based on the contractor's offer for the contract under bidding and shall be subject to detailed evaluation. The lowest calculated responsive bidder shall undergo Post-Qualification before the award of the Contract. Bid prices submitted higher than the ABC shall be rejected and returned outright.

Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms will be available for issuance at the Small Conference Room, Main Lobby, BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center 31st Street Corner 2nd Avenue, Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Metro Manila before 4:00 pm on **October 18-25, 2007** upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) addressed to the BMHI Procurement Bids and Award Committee (BMHI-PBAC) Chairperson and payment of a non-refundable fee of **ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS 00/100 (P1,500.00)**. Duly accomplished Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms shall be submitted not later than **October 25, 2007, 12:00 NN** at the above-mentioned address.

Should you need any further information or clarification regarding the Project, you may get in touch with Atty. Gisela Z. Kalalo and Margarita G. Ignacio at tel. no. 816-6666 local 184 & 221, and Dennis B. Dagunton at tel. no. 541-3160 of the BMHI-PBAC Secretariat.

(Sgd.) GLORIA GEORGINA DJ JOTA
BMHI-PBAC Chairperson

BCDA Corporate Center 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center,
31st Street cor. 2nd Avenue, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, M.M.
Tel. No. 816-6666

(PDI - Oct. 22, 2007)



Infrastructure for Rural Productivity Enhancement Sector
(InfRES) Project InfRES PROJECT OFFICE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Provision of Training Services for Design and Delivery of Training Package 5 - Design and Conduct of Training on O&M

The Government of the Philippines' Department of Agriculture (DA) with funding assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB Loan - 1772-PH) is currently undertaking the Infrastructure for Rural Productivity Enhancement Sector (InfRES) Project. The Project is designed to improve rural productivity and reduce poverty in target rural areas through the provision of demand-driven rural infrastructure and activities that strengthen local capacities for devolved project implementation and management. The Project under Component 2 supports a program of capacity building that includes strengthening of LGUs, NGOs, Community Organizations and the DA in managing and implementing community-driven rural infrastructure projects.

This invitation is intended to invite qualified training providers to apply for eligibility and bid for the design and delivery of **Training Package 5 - Training on O&M to 81 LGUs in 9 regions in Southern Philippines**. This course will be provided to LGUs with about to be completed or on-going subproject implementation aimed to build their capabilities in maintaining their subprojects.

The InfRES Project Office invites qualified training providers to submit proposals together with qualification documents. The training providers/institutions will be selected in accordance with existing GOP and ADB Procurement Guidelines on the Use of Consultants.

Basic Qualification Requirements:

- Must have at least 3 years experience and track record in designing, conducting and managing training programs/courses particularly for LGUs
- Must have a team of qualified experts/resource persons whose field of expertise and experience are within the proposed training areas with relevant qualification and experience as trainers or resource persons in their specific field of expertise;
- Must be an accredited training institution of Civil Service Commission, LGA and/or other accrediting institutions

Proposals and qualification documents must be submitted on or before **5:00 PM, November 29, 2007** to: **MR. MICHAEL J. ALLMAN**, Team Leader and Project Management Specialist, InfRES Project (Attn: Richelda Salameo, Training Officer), InfRES Project Office, 2nd Floor JAFER Building, 118 West Ave., Quezon City.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) and Qualification requirements shall be issued starting October 29, 2007 by the Project Office. For further information, interested parties may inquire during office hours at the following telephone numbers: 928-76-05/928-76-15. You can also visit our website at www.infres.com.ph

(PDI - Oct. 15 & 22, 2007)

Contract Manager

The US Naval Facilities Engineering command is seeking qualified applicants for the position of service contract project manager at WESMINCOM Zamboanga City, Mindanao. Contract currently encompasses aviation and waterfront operations, dining facility operation, MWR, facilities support. Employment will initially be via annual renewable contract. Qualified applicants will be required to have appropriate clearances and will preferably have had prior military experience. Submit resumé, compensation requirements, and inquiries to: HRO@navfacpacific.us.

Quality Assurance Representative

The US Naval Facilities Engineering command is seeking qualified applicants for the position of quality assurance representative at WESMINCOM Zamboanga City, Mindanao. The position will provide quality assurance for service contracts and construction contracts. Employment will initially be via annual renewable contract. Qualified applicants will be required to have a minimum of a BS in an appropriate engineering curriculum from an accredited university. Submit resumé, compensation requirements, and inquiries to: HRO@navfacpacific.us.

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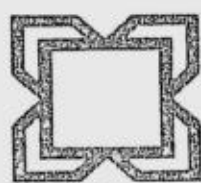


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NOTICE TO ALL ELIGIBLE BIDDERS

Please be informed that the deadline for the submission of Bids for the Construction of New DBP Marbel Branch Building is moved from October 29, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. to November 5, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at DBP Marbel Branch, Alunan Avenue, General Santos City on or before 10:00 a.m. of November 5, 2007. Bid opening shall be at 2:00 p.m. of November 5, 2007 at DBP, Marbel Branch, Alunan Avenue, Koronadal City.

(Sgd.) **ELVIE N. EULLARAN-ALBANO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - October 22 & 29, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that the following series of Official Receipt (OR) and Provisional Receipt (PR) of SCANASIA OVERSEAS, INC. are missing:

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For further inquiries, please call our office @ **815-0123**

(PDI - October 9, 14 & 22, 2007)

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NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **ENTREX, INC.** has been dissolved. If you have any valid claims against said company, please contact (Rizza B. Blanco) at Tel. No. (5269443).

(PDI - October 4 - 24, 2007)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that **Liberty Aviation Corporation** has been dissolved. If you have any valid claims against said company, please contact (Rizza B. Blanco) at Tel. No. (5269443).

(PDI - October 4 - 24, 2007)



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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (JANITORIAL SERVICES)

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) intends to apply the sum of Eleven Million Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P11,300,000.00) being the approved budget for the contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Janitorial Services. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The DAR, now invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders for Janitorial Manpower of three (3) supervisors and Seventy eight (78) Janitors. The Contract for Janitorial Services shall be for a period of six (6) months from January 2008 to June 2008. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Instruction to Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-AO) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only bids from bidders who pass eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bids (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Department of Agrarian Reform Bids and Awards Committee (DAR-BAC) and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. starting October 17-23, 2007.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php. 20,000.00. The method of payment will be in the form of cash. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

The DAR - BAC will hold a Pre Bid Conference open to all interested parties on October 24, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at HRD Training Center, DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Dilliman, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before November 8, 2007. Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in either of the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
GSIS Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Cash, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check or Bank Draft	One percent (1%)

Bid opening shall be on November 8, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidder's representative who choose to attend the opening of bids.

The DAR BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) GERUNDIO C. MADUEÑO
Undersecretary, SSO
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - October 16 & 22, 2007)



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Elliptical Road, Dilliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (SECURITY SERVICES)

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) intends to apply the sum of Seventeen Million Five Hundred Thirty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Pesos (P17,534,880.00) being the approved budget for the contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Security Services. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The DAR now invites sealed Bids from eligible bidders for 81 Security guards including 1 Detachment Commander and 3 Shift-In-Charge/Supervisors. The Contract for Security Services shall be for a period of six (6) months from January 2008 to June 2008. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Instruction to Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-AO) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorship or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only bids from bidders who pass eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in ITB. The bidder with the lowest calculated bids (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine his responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Department of Agrarian Reform Bids and Awards Committee (DAR-BAC) and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. starting October 17-23, 2007.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php.20,000.00. The method of payment will be in the form of cash. The bidding documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

The DAR - BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on October 24, 2007, 10:00 a.m. at HRD Training Center, DAR Compound, Elliptical Road, Dilliman, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before November 8, 2007. Late bids shall not be accepted. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in either of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
GSIS Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Cash, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check or Bank Draft	One percent (1%)

Bid opening shall be on November 8, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidder's representative who choose to attend the opening of bids.

The DAR BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Department of Agrarian Reform
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
Elliptical Road, Dilliman, Quezon City
Tel No. 9261891; 926-9866, 9287031 loc 511

(Sgd.) GERUNDIO C. MADUEÑO
Undersecretary, SSO
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - Oct. 16 & 22, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PRESIDENTIAL BROADCAST STAFF-RTVM
MALACANANG, MANILA

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Presidential Broadcast Staff-RTVM, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of Broadcast Equipment
Location : RTVM Bldg., Gate 6, Malacanang, Manila
Approved Budget : Php 3,423,132.00
for the Contract
Delivery Period : 30 days

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Date	Time	Place
1) Issuance of Bid Documents	Oct. 15-26, 2007	10:00 AM to 5:00 PM	PBS-RTVM
2) Pre-Bidding Conference	Oct. 25, 2007	2:00 PM	PBS-RTVM
3) Last Day of Submission and Opening of Bids	November 09, 2007	10:00 AM	PBS-RTVM

Bid Documents including details of specification will be available at the PBS-RTVM Procurement Section of the Admin. and Finance Division (c/o Mr. Cyrus M. Reputana) Tel Nos. 734-5681/735-6187 to prospective bidders only upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 700.00 to the Presidential Broadcast Staff-RTVM Cashier.

The Presidential Broadcast Staff-RTVM assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) Melba B. Aligaen
BAC Chairman

(PDI - October 15 & 22, 2007)



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PSBank senior vice-president Jaime V.L. Araneta and Philippine Real Estate Festival 2007 chairperson Rosemarie Custodio Basa signed a memorandum of agreement signifying the bank's support for the Philippine properties event at the World Trade Center in Manila on July 26-29, 2007. This year's gathering dubbed "Balik-Bahayan, Sariling Bahay sa Sariling Bayan for OFWs" featured an expo highlighting the most comprehensive showcase of real estate developments currently available in the market today. PSBank's participation is geared towards helping OFWs with their housing needs through its innovative Home Loan products.

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Western Union and EMCOR sign agreement

MANILA, PHILIPPINES - EMCOR, A WHOLLY-owned Filipino retail chain of household appliances and motorcycles and The Western Union Company (NYSE:WU), a leading provider of global money transfer services, have reached an agreement to offer Western Union Money Transfer services via EMCOR's retail stores in Visayas and Mindanao.

Davao City-based EMCOR is the first retail company to join Western Union's network of more than 6,400 Agent locations in the Philippines. EMCOR has nine existing affiliated companies that produce high-quality products and services in the motorcycle and household appliance industry. In becoming a Western Union Agent, EMCOR will be the first company of its kind in the Philippines to offer remittance services. Being based outside of Metro Manila also strengthens Western Union's footprint in the Vis-Min area.

"Because our business is in the re-selling of products rather than manufacturing them, the essence of our company's business operation is high-quality customer service," said Jesus del Rosario, founder of EMCOR.

"EMCOR's reputation for excellent customer service and drive for maximum client satisfaction fits well with Western Union's focus on taking care of our customers," said Patricia Riingen, Western Union's vice president for the Philippines. "This partnership gives us the opportunity to reach out to Filipinos in the Visayas-Mindanao area and offer them the same quality service we offer our customers in Manila. By the end of this year, EMCOR will have specially-built Western Union kiosks in 100 EMCOR retail stores for easy access and convenience."

About EMCOR

EMCOR, was founded in 1958 as the franchise

dealer for International Harvesters in Mindanao. In 1976, it shifted its product lines to motorcycles and appliances. For the first time, the company will not only offer products but also Western Union services to consumers available in 100 EMCOR retail outlets.

About Western Union

The Western Union Company (NYSE: WU) is a leader in global money transfer services. Together with its affiliates, Orlandi Valuta and Vigo, Western Union provides consumers with fast, reliable and convenient ways to send and receive money around the world, as well as send payments and purchase money orders. It operates through a network of more than 312,000 Agent locations in over 200 countries and territories. Famous for its pioneering telegraph services, the original Western Union dates back to 1851. For more information, visit westernunion.com.

OBITUARIES

EMILIA BIGATA REFORMINA LOTEYRO

from Malinao, Albay; Chicago, Illinois;
Queens Row, Cavite; and Eastwood City, Libis

Peacefully joined her Creator
on October 21, 2007 at the age of 92.

Her children Pita (Ross) Rina, Vicky Reformina, Nel (Malu) Reformina, nee. Oppi (Ben) Yap, and Cora Loteyro; grandchildren Rey (Jhoy) Javellana and daughter Alli; Ken (Jamie) Leder and son Aidan, Louie, Carla, Dianne, and Rissa Reformina; Raymond (Leah) Yap and son Giddy, Marco (Karen) Yap, Sophia and Edmond Yap; and Elizabeth Loteyro-Wason and numerous relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, October 27, 2007, 3PM at the Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 12 noon requiem mass at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Cubao.

REV. MSGR. CIRIACO SEVILLA, JR., HP

died in the Grace of Our Lord on
the 18th of October, 2007 at the age of 70

lies in state on Oct. 22-23 at the Our Lady of Fatima Church in Apad, Calauag, Quezon, and on Oct. 24-25 at San Diego de Alcalá Cathedral, Gumaca, Quezon.

The funeral mass will be on Oct. 25, 2007, Thursday, at 9:00 am at San Diego de Alcalá Cathedral.

MAY HE FIND REPOSE IN THE LORD.

DEATH NOTICE

KURT MATHEW B. ISIP

Born November 08, 1996 submit to God's Grace on October 19, 2007 will have his final rites on October 23, 2007. Those who wish to see him may see @ 67 Aries St. Purok 3, Tipo Hermosa, Bataan.

PO KIO VDA de ATIENZA

of Cotabato City

Now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord.

She joined our Creator on the
19th of October 2007, at the age of 95.

Her loving husband Elpidio J. Atienza (deceased)

Her children : Manuel and Shun Shun
Conchita and Lucio Tan
Tomas and Rosita
Juanita (deceased) and Yu Beng Chua
Sui Bi and David Samols
Siu Ti and Karl Siebert
Jose and Pilar
Dionisia and Guat Sy Jr.
Angelina and Roque Peran
Roberto and Alma

Her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and all relatives and friends request to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz Chapel Superior De-Luxe, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Viewing time at 7:30 PM, October 22, 2007, Monday.

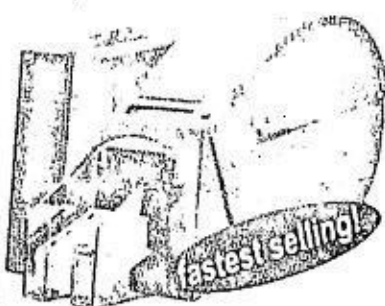
Cremation schedule will be on October 24, 2007.

BUSINESS

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VAT reform law adds to gov't coffers

DOF: Tax agencies generated P44B in additional revenue

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT GENERATED P43.7 billion in additional revenue in the first half, following the implementation of the Value-Added Tax Reform Law (RVAT).

The Department of Finance reported over the weekend that, although the amount fell short of its P45.5-billion goal, it was still higher than the P55.4 billion collected in the same period a year ago.

The shortfall came about when the Bureau of Customs failed to collect VAT on raw materials for petroleum. The BOC's shortfall in VAT collection partly offset the Bureau of Internal Revenue's excess collection.

The DOF said that, of the VAT collection in the first semester, the BIR accounted for P19.9 billion, while the BOC turned in the remaining P23.8 billion. The BIR exceeded its target of P17.7 billion, but the BOC recorded a shortfall from its goal of P27.9 billion.

The BIR collects VAT on domestically produced goods, while the BOC imposes VAT on imports.

The VAT Reform Law, considered to be the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform agenda, raised the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent and expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity.

Despite its unpopularity, the administration's economic managers strongly lobbied for its implementation, claiming that this would help the government attain its goal of a balanced budget. Credit rating agencies closely monitor the government's RVAT collection in assessing its capability to improve its fiscal condition.

The government hopes to post a balanced budget by 2008, after 10 years of being in the red. The government had been registering deficits since 1998, a year after the Asian financial crisis, which took its toll on corporate earnings and, therefore, tax collection.

In age of terror, insurance may come in handy

By Doris C. Dumlaog

DAYS BEFORE AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE ripped through a mall in Makati City, claiming nine lives, members of the non-life insurance industry announced that they would soon introduce terrorism risk insurance, as part of an effort to diversify their product offerings.

In a press briefing last week, Michael Rellosa of the Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association said that there are so many ways to jack up the industry's low penetration rate of 15 percent in the country.

"There are products already available in other countries, but which are still in the drawing boards here, like terrorism insurance, which protects business from terrorist bombings," said Rellosa, PIRA director.

Terrorism risk insurance is a policy purchased by property owners to cover potential losses and liabilities resulting from a terror attack. It is considered to be a difficult product to sell because the probability of a terrorist strike is hard to assess, while potential losses may be enormous.

Aside from being prone to natural disasters, the country has had its share of terrorist strikes, the most recent of which was the bomb attack at the Glorietta shopping mall in Makati last Friday. Authorities are still investigating the deadly blast that also left more than 100 people injured.

"Filipinos must be taught to be more safety and security conscious," Rellosa said.

He said that the non-life insurance industry is working hard to market comprehensive insurance coverage even for cars that are older than five years, and increase the number of households that are covered with insurance policies.

Rellosa said the industry's profitability rate, as measured by the return on investments, had recently gone down to 4 percent. In previous years, the industry's ROI was about 12 percent.

"This means it is more profitable to invest your money in the money market than in an insurance company," he said. "And the amount of taxes that we pay is one of the highest in the world at 24.5 percent."

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BUSINESS Monday



MEMBERS of the 1st Philippine Business Mission to Vietnam

By Willy E. Arcilla
Contributor

FILIPINO BUSINESSMEN ARE FINDING green pastures in Vietnam, and those that are already there are encouraging their colleagues to follow suit.

Here are some tips to guide those considering putting their money in the growing economy of Vietnam.

Move fast. A first mover advantage was critical for Liwayway Marketing, according to president and COO Oszen Chan, who built its first snacks and candy plant in Ho Chi Minh in 1996.

Today, O-ishi is the leading brand in the market, and the company recently opened a second plant in Hanoi to capitalize on the growing market in the north.

Be aggressive. Ernst & Young partner and head of advisory services Jun Torres exhorts Filipino businessmen to be bold and brave. Otherwise, the windows of opportunity will vanish rapidly as thousands of more aggressive businessmen from Korea, Singapore, India and even the Middle East, rush in and seize the opportunities.

Learn to trust. Torres also allayed fears of businessmen about dealing with the Vietnamese, who used to have a reputation of being shrewd, by saying, if the Vietnamese are not trustworthy, then the country would not have attracted \$10 billion in foreign direct investments in 2006, and another \$20 billion in FDI projected for 2007.

"Once you earn their trust and respect, you will enjoy a strong partnership with them," Torres said.

Customer is king. George Rosales of Fuji Films urged Filipino businessmen to treat the customer as king (or queen), indicating that "going the extra mile" became the single most important success factor for Fuji Films to achieve market leadership.

"Coddle customers like babies because competition is intensifying from all directions," Rosales said.

Innovation. Liwayway's Chan reveals that a critical ingredient for success in Vietnam's FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) industry is innovation, consisting of new products, flavors and line extensions that constantly delight consumers and strengthen brand loyalty to O-ishi.

Simple, effective marketing. Rowell Viandre, Unilever vice president and head of personal care products, attributed the phenomenal growth of Unilever in Vietnam to simple yet effective marketing programs that build strong brand awareness and saliency, products that offer consumers a meaningful reason to buy, advertising campaigns that communicate rational and emotional benefits in an informative and entertaining manner, value-for-money pricing strategies, nontraditional media, such as proprietary TV soap operas, and aggressive expansion of distribution infrastructure.

Foreign brands enjoy aspirational image. Roy Esturninos of Triumph International shared that Vietnamese consumers continue to find foreign brands aspirational, and therefore it is advisable to capitalize on their favorable cachet to establish an image of premium quality and appeal to the upper income bracket, because even the lower income segment will aspire to own and buy these brands.

Demand is not price sensitive

Due to growing affluence and a positive disposition to foreign brands, consumer demand is not price sensitive.

In fact, products and services at higher prices are perceived to be of better quality.

SMPP's Teddy Kho talked about specific instances when demand even increased after prices were raised.

SMPP is in feeds, raises hogs, operates a slaughterhouse and makes processed meat.

Have faith in the Vietnamese. Believe in the power of the Vietnamese—the only people on Earth who have successfully defeated three global superpowers—China, France and the United States.

For having adhered to this belief in the positive attitude of the Vietnamese, Teddy Kho of San Miguel Purefoods succeeded in growing revenues threefold in only 4 years—an unprecedented record in San Miguel's international business.

Fix problems, don't run away from them. When the prawn farms in Negros

DOING/B2-2

Doing business in Vietnam

Windows of opportunity are wide open to RP firms

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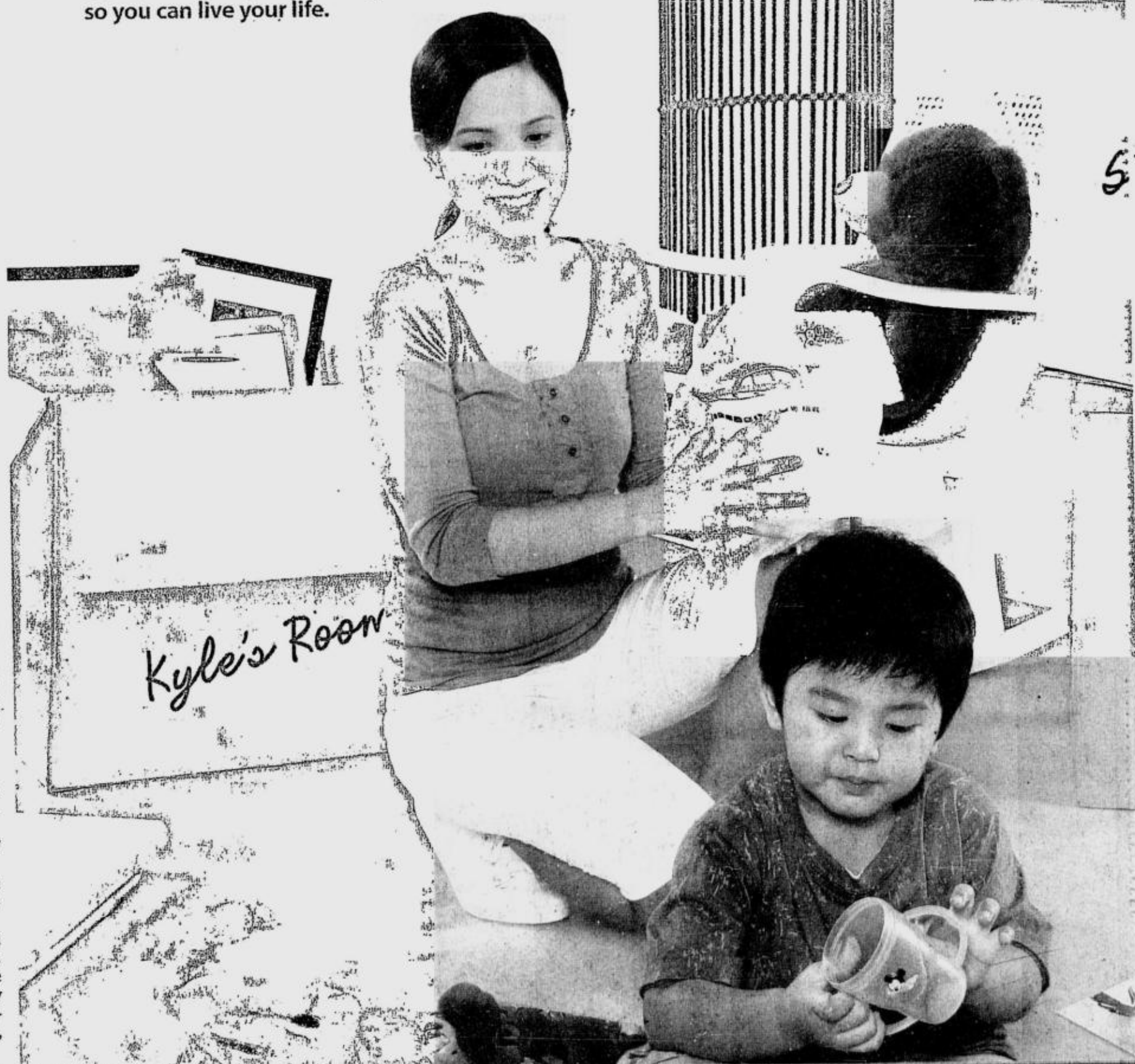
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50% profit sharing system based on 2 principles

UNITY IS ALWAYS NECESSARY, whether in the family, community, company or world affairs.

Without unity, all sorts of problems occur.

One of the best ways to foster unity in the company is profit sharing. One reason why profit sharing is important is, it can play a major role in eradicating poverty.

Contrary to the common notion that profit sharing will reduce profits, in the long term—at least 10 years—we believe the profits of the company will even be more.

Our company, San Jose Kitchen Cabinets Manufacturing, started studying the concept of profit sharing in 1982. For about five years, we practiced what I call the "abot-abot" system, which is actually just giving a portion of our profits to our employees without a formal system. In 1987, we found the principles on which to base percentage to be shared with our employees. For about 20 years now, these principles hold, and the percentage has not changed.

The application of the profit sharing is rather simple. All employees' benefits are already part of the 50 percent employee's share and therefore not anymore part of the company's expenses.

The profit sharing system

Also, before declaring the percentage share for the employees, the inflationary allowance due to equity is first deducted.

Principles

1. In any economic activity or business enterprise, there are always two partners that are necessary. They are the employees and capital. One cannot exist without the other. Thus, both deserve a share in the fruits of their union.

2. The similarity of both partners is that before we can talk of profit sharing, we first have to satisfy the basic needs of each partner. Employees need to receive a regular income or salary to meet their daily expenses. Without it, employees will not be able to maintain their physical and mental health. Similarly with capital, it has to receive some kind of additional funds to correct its value due to inflation.

Accounting system

From the above principles, we designed an accounting system with the following major features:

1. Since neither employees nor capital can exist without the other, a logical profit sharing would be 50-50.

2. Before we can declare a 50-50 profit share, we need to satisfy the maintenance needs of both partners:

a. For employees, there should be a regular salary, enough to maintain their physical and mental health. The salary of the employee at the lowest level should however not exceed what is enough to satisfy his daily needs as stated above; otherwise, the second principle will be violated. In a study made years ago by the University of

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Oscar P. Chan



Asia and Pacific, the monthly living wage for a family of five is around P15,000.

b. For capital, an inflation allowance shall be provided equivalent to the inflation rate multiplied by the owner's equity. This inflation allowance shall have to be deducted first before the 50-50 profit sharing is computed.

3. All employees' benefits, such as SSS employer's share, contribution to retirement fund, medical assistance, etc., and other incentives such as sales commission, are already considered part of the employees' 50-percent profit share. These do not form part of the operating expenses anymore.

4. If and when the company incurs a loss, or when the employees' benefits exceed the 50-percent share for the employees in a particular year, the losses (which include the inflation factor) will be a receivable of the company from the employees' profit share in the next profitable year(s). A maximum of 50 percent of the profit share for distribution shall be used to pay for the losses of the previous year(s).

Basis for profit sharing distribution to employees

1. Performance
2. Job Levels

Coverage

All regular employees from the lowest to the highest level (although I am the proprietor, as general manager of the company, I am also an employee; therefore, I draw a regular salary and participate in the employees' profit sharing).

Important factors

1. The difference between the compensation, both salary and profit share, of the highest and lowest ranking employees should be reasonable (as a practice, we are using a maximum 10 times, but other companies may differ depending on their size and other factors).

2. In line with the principles of proper governance, the owner should use the company's resources only for legitimate business related purposes, and there should be proper accounting for this.

3. There should be transparency in the financial statements.

Comparative income statements using conventional accounting and 50 percent profit sharing accounting system

1. When sales are average—P64.92 million
 2. When sales are good—P76.92 million
 3. When sales are high—P114 million
 4. When sales are almost breakeven—P56.69 million
 5. When sales are below breakeven—P52.01 million
 6. When sales are way below breakeven—P48.46 million
- Please note that the actual profit share percentage for the

employees as applied in the conventional accounting system are 10 percent, 32 percent, and 43 percent for the first three examples.

If the sales are average, the profit share is only 10 percent. Only when the sales go up does the percentage share approach 50 percent.

On the other hand, when sales are low as in examples 4, 5 and 6, the return on equity for the accounting system with 50-percent profit share provides the company with a protective measure and a better chance to stay positive in the bottom line.

The examples are presented to facilitate understanding of the difference between the two systems.

It should be noted, however, that there is a big difference in the employees' emotional connection to the company between the conventional accounting system and the accounting system with 50 percent profit share.

Advantages

Compared to a company with no profit sharing, all other things being the same, a company that adopts this profit sharing system will have the following advantages:

1. In the long term, 10 years at least, the company's total profitability will be better.

The following are my bases:

- a. A period of 20-year test (1987-2007)
- b. Employee engagement study—defined as the measure of emotional connection an employee feels for his organi-

zation; this influences the employee to exert greater discretionary effort to his work.

The worldwide average is 12 percent. Only one in seven employees worldwide is fully engaged and willing to go the extra mile for his company (www.management-issue.com). c. Proverbs 11:24-25.

2. It is less difficult to manage the company.

3. It can do away with some of the stressful part of a CBA.

4. Profit sharing is contributory to social justice, and social justice is a major factor to long-term peace.

5. Evangelization of employees will be more effective (for Christian businessmen).

And again, just to restate: The application of the profit sharing is simple. All employees' benefits are already part of the 50-percent employees' share and therefore not anymore part of the company's expenses.

Also, before declaring the percentage share for the employees, the inflationary allowance due to equity is first deducted.

If you would like to know more about our profit sharing system, please feel free to contact me: People's Technology Complex, Carmona, Cavite, Philippines; tel. 046-4302047; E-mail: OSCAR_CHAN@yahoo.com.ph.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is general manager of San Jose Kitchen Cabinets Manufacturing. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

Doing business in Vietnam

From page B2-1

were hit by a disease many years ago, resulting in huge losses, the owners decided to close the farms and move to other businesses, lamented Raul Bautista, a leading seafood exporter.

A similar disease affected the prawn farms in Vietnam. But instead of running away, the Vietnamese persevered, buckled down and worked collectively to find a cure—which they eventually did.

Raul Bautista, of Vietnamese-Filipino descent, was a victim of the Vietnam War and was one of the first evacuees to reach Palawan.

He has set up a successful business in Ho Chi Minh, exporting Vietnamese seafood.

Prioritize the poor. Bautista confirms that, unlike in the Philippines where close to 60 million Filipinos continue to live on two dollars per day, Vietnam has dramatically reduced poverty from as high as 60 percent in 1990 to only 15 percent in 2006, after only 15 years.

This can be attributed to a pro-poor policy prioritizing small farmers and sustenance fishermen to achieve self-sufficiency in food production and eventually turn agriculture and fisheries into a globally competitive export machine.

Raw materials cheaper than in China. As a result of the government's emphasis on agriculture and food production, food companies such as Oishi enjoy lower costs of raw materials, specifically rice and corn, for use in their salty and savory snacks, according to Liwayway's spokesperson Jay Diaz, thus improving their profit margins.

Also, the lower cost of living there allows for lower wages compared to that in the Philippines.

Good chemistry. Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry Director for International Affairs Nguyen Van Tuan cited the good chemistry between Vietnamese and Filipinos at work.

It is characterized by strong work ethic, sincerity, hospitali-

ty, mutual respect and a cheerful attitude.

He also expressed the VCCI's favorable impressions over the success of the Philippine-Vietnam Business Mission, saying it was the best group of Filipino businessmen to come to Ho Chi Minh, and the 6-week lead time earned it the distinction of being the best and fastest mission organized by any country.

Higher productivity, lower wages and higher savings rates. Roy Esturninos of Triumph also praises the high productivity of Vietnamese laborers, despite wage rates that are lower than the Philippines yet still allow workers to save more from their incomes compared to their Filipino counterparts.

He also warns of imminent shortages in labor supply, estimating that 30 percent of industrial estates are already experiencing labor shortages.

Simpler lifestyles. The higher savings rates can be attributed to several factors, namely their frugality and simpler lifestyles; Confucian values of living within one's means and

saving for the children's future needs, the lower cost-of-living due to the abundance and affordability of fresh and healthy food; and, an entrepreneurial spirit that drives Vietnamese to run small businesses after finishing work in offices and factories.

Entrepreneurship. When a newcomer asks if there are shopping malls in Vietnam, he or she needs to only look around Ho Chi Minh where thousands of small and medium-scale businesses operate on both sides of the road.

Indeed, Ho Chi Minh can be described as a "city mall," and the proliferation of family-owned SMSEs (small and medium-scale enterprises) has been pivotal in the development of commercial activity and equitable growth in recent years.

Fighting spirit. The Vietnamese people are fearless and they know how to fight, as they have demonstrated in the last century.

But according to Hana Dang, Golden Communications

group CEO and country manager of BankInvest, the Vietnamese are tired of fighting, and would now like to channel their energy positively toward improving the welfare and quality of life of the people through vigorous economic activity in all sectors.

They are resilient, tenacious and do not complain a lot about their heavy workload.

Be sensitive to Vietnamese values. Roy also recommends that prospective businessmen should be sensitive to the traditional values of Vietnamese, which is the reason why Triumph does not show too much skin in their billboards or print ads promoting women's underwear. The company even limits its fashion shows to internal events.

Vietnam is HOT! Bong Arjonillo, Citibank country treasurer, confirmed the global business community has its sights trained on Vietnam as shown by the rising tide of foreign direct investments and rapid expansion in the volume of transactions in

the local bourse.

While China was the biggest story in the mid-'80s to the '90s, and India in the early 2000s, Vietnam is emerging as the hottest market in the near future.

(A business conference on "Doing business with Vietnam" is being organized by ZMG Signium Ward Howell Inc. and the University of Asia and the Pacific on Oct. 23, featuring speakers from the Vietnamese government and private sector.)

Applications for the second Philippine-Vietnam Business Mission scheduled in end-November are now open for Filipino executives and entrepreneurs.

Interested parties may call (632) 816-2466 or e-mail to sdeguzman@wardhowell.com.ph.)

(The author is regional director of ZMG Signium Ward Howell Inc. and co-organizer of the first Philippine-Vietnam Business Mission. He is also president of Business Mentors, a newly established management consultancy firm.)

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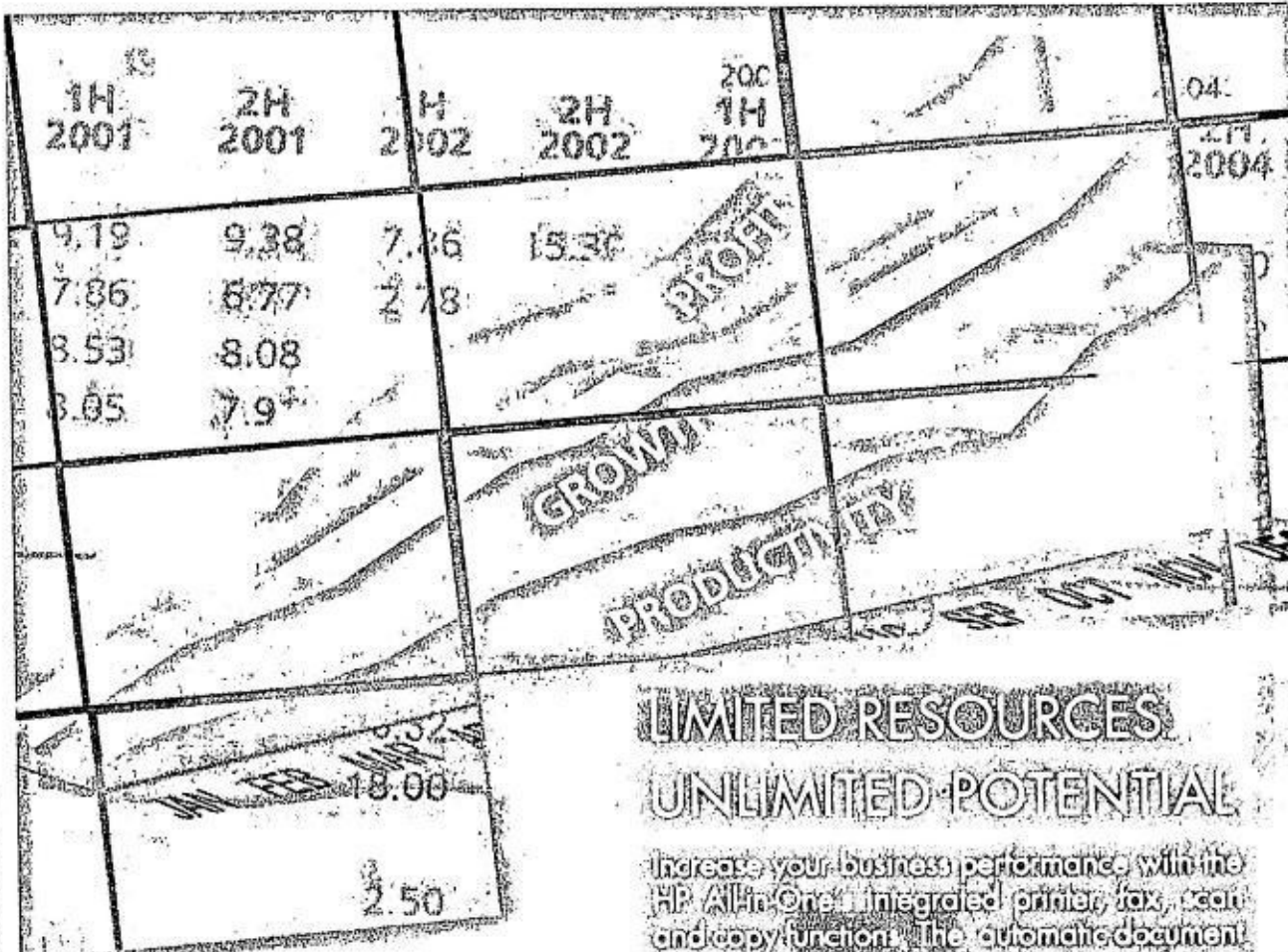


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DR. BRADLEY K. Googins, PhD, executive director of the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship (top), shares the latest trends in CSR with members of the League of Corporate Foundations.



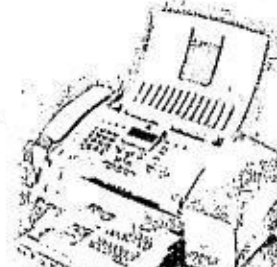
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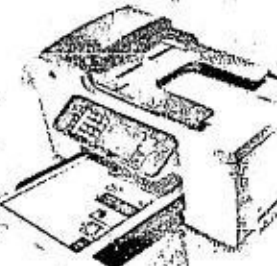
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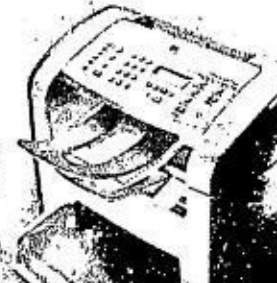
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BUSINESSMonday



CLARK is being developed as a primary gateway of the Philippines.

TONETTE T. OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

Hello, Clark

'The future of RP aviation'

By Riza T. Olchondra

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE was an airport called the Ninoy Aquino International Airport terminal 3 (Naia-3), fabled to be built at par with the best in the world.

Alas, legal troubles left the Naia-3 unfinished for years while another airport captured the industry's imagination: the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA), called by many as "Clark" because it is located inside the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga.

Primary gateway

"Clark will become the Philippines' primary gateway," no less than Transportation and Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza said during a recent meeting with the joint foreign chambers of commerce in the Philippines.

"There are other airports being developed to regional standards. But we are developing Clark as a primary gateway. We will connect Clark to Manila via the NorthRail," he said.

The foreign chambers were more direct, saying they were not waiting for the opening of Naia-3, but wanted a larger Clark terminal instead.

"Clark is the future of Philippine aviation," said Brian Lane, chairperson of the AmCham Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and director of the Australian-New Zealand chamber of commerce.

Surging numbers

Lane said Naia terminals are simply too congested and hemmed in by residential and commercial structures to deal with surging passenger numbers.

"During peak hours, planes in Naia are in a holding pattern for 30 minutes waiting to land. There has been an increasing number of planes diverted to Clark to refuel, adding costs and delays," he said. "Even if Naia-3 opens next year, it will only give us reprieve for two years."

Lane noted that all major airports in the world are located at least 20 kilometers away from the city center to avoid security and safety issues that arise from having residential and commercial structures close to the airport facilities.

This also makes expansion works easier to manage.

And expansion in Clark is on-target, said the Clark International Airport Corp. (CIAC), which operates the DMIA.

CIAC president Victor Luciano said DMIA's passenger terminal is being expanded to the tune of P130 million, all from internal cash.

The first phase will be finished in January next year and will increase Clark's capacity to two million passengers a year.

The second phase will increase capacity to five million passengers.

"We're taking off," Luciano said.

The joint foreign chambers comprise the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Australian-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce (Phils.), Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., European Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Phils., Korean Chamber of Commerce of the Phils., and the Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters.

Airline opens Cagayan to Macau flight

By Estanislao Caldez
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TUGUEGARAO CITY—AN ASIAN Spirit Boeing plane carrying 18 casino players from Macau landed at the Tuguegarao airport last Thursday to start its flight from that Chinese gambling center.

The Macau visitors were invited by officials of the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport in Sta. Ana town.

Cagayan officials led by Gov. Alvaro Antonio led the group that welcomed the visitors, who were entertained with songs and dances at the airport.

"The historic flight opens the development and progress of Cagayan," Antonio told the visitors.

With the flight from Macau to Tuguegarao, Asian Spirit plans to have other flights from 14 cities in Asia and the Pacific to ferry tourists and investors to Cagayan, he said.

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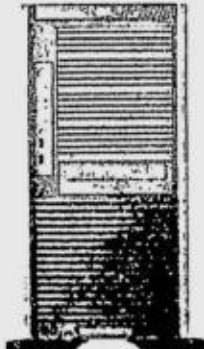
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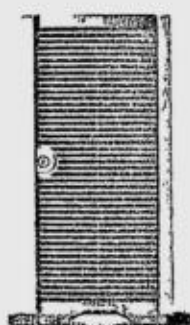
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PSBank joins search for RP's best cops

By Daxim L. Lucas

IN THE REALM OF CORPORATE SOCIAL responsibility, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. is recognized as a staunch supporter of the education sector through its annual search for the 10 most outstanding educators in the country.

Building on this success of its parent firm, Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank) recently joined hands with the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Metrobank Foundation and Rotary Club of New Manila East to launch the 2008 Metrobank Foundation Search for the Country's Outstanding Policemen in Service (COPS).

The program is an annual search that honors four commissioned officers and six non-commissioned officers who demonstrate integrity, courage and professionalism on duty.

Cooperative efforts

Speaking during the recent launching ceremonies, PSBank president Pascual Garcia III said that the COPS program seeks to highlight the cooperative efforts between the police and the community in safeguarding peace and order.

Since 2003, COPS has recognized 50 policemen and women, while supporting the "One PNP" program of the police force, with emphasis on the Neighborhood Participation Thrust.

"Heroism definitely happens every day much like the thousands of members of the PNP who place themselves in harm's way for the safety of our nation and in the name of justice," Garcia said.

"While the role of the police is to maintain order and peace through enforcement of laws and societal norms, they also assume other functions during emergency situations and actively participate in community service," he added.

Everyday heroes

The PSBank chief explained that his institution's support for the program comes because of the recognition that "every Filipino strives for a better life, not only for himself but for the [larger] society as well."

Aside from its primary commitment to address the consumer's financial needs, the country's second largest thrift bank also supports the nationwide search for "everyday heroes" who share its vision for a better society, he said.

During the COPS Summit held recently in Makati City, a memorandum of agreement was signed between PSBank, represented by Garcia, and PNP chief Avelino Razon Jr.

Other signatories were Metrobank Foundation president Aniceto Sobrepeña and Rotary Club of New Manila East president Gener Mendoza.

PSBANK/B3-2



(From left) PNP director PCSupt. Ismael Rafanan; PSBank CEO Pascual M. Garcia III and Metrobank Foundation president Aniceto Sobrepeña



PNP officials led by PNP Director General Avelino Razon, Jr. (left) with Rotary Club of New Manila East president Gener Mendoza (2nd from right).

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See flyers for more details. Per DTI NCR Permit # 5116 Series of 2007.

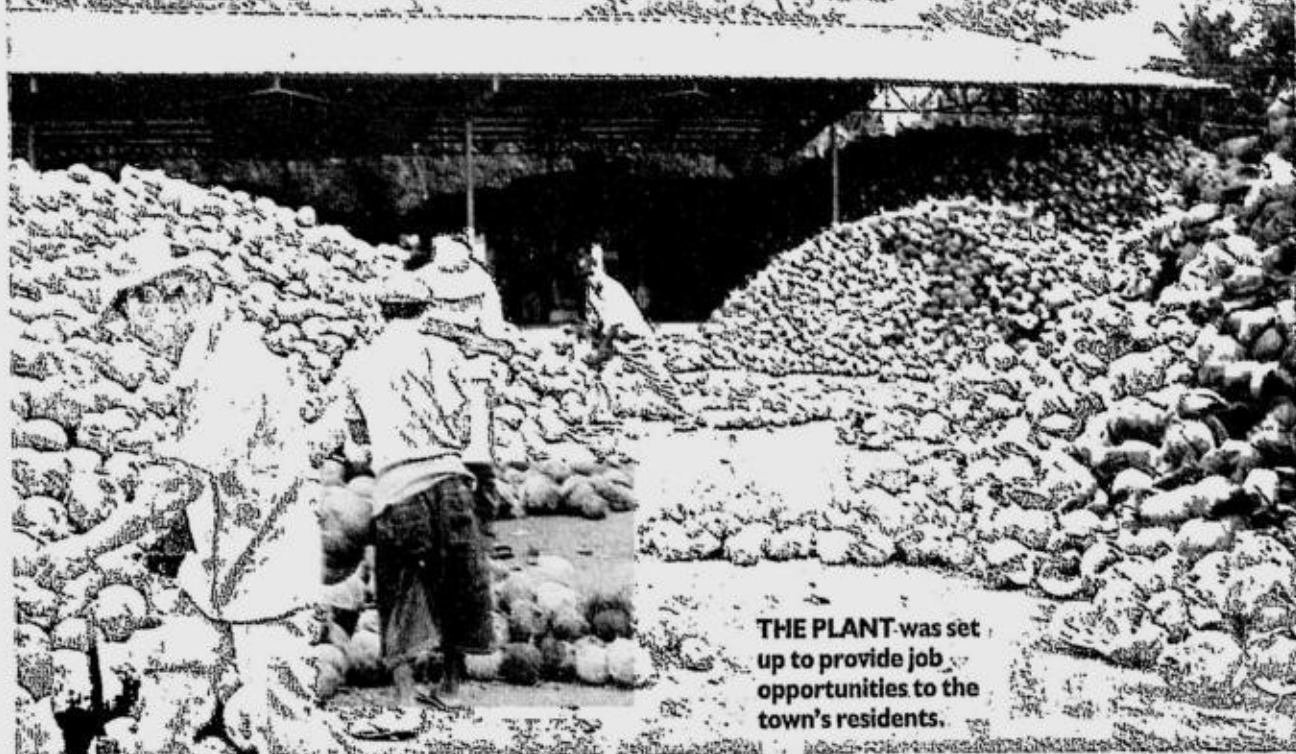
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Farmers earn extra income from coco fiber



THE PLANT was set up to provide job opportunities to the town's residents.

Text and photos by Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—SOME 200 FARMING families in a small town in Eastern Samar are augmenting their income by making coconut fiber nets in the province's first and only integrated coconut processing plant.

The families have been working at the Hernani Integrated Coconut Processing Plant, located in Barangay Padang of Hernani, a fifth class municipality of Eastern Samar that is about 145 km from Tacloban City.

Owned and operated by the local government, the processing plant has been producing virgin coconut oil, coco lotions and other coco-based products like the coconut fiber nets, also known as geotextile.

Hernani Mayor Cesar G. Tagon Sr. told the INQUIRER that they decided to concentrate more on the production of geotextile nets, which are used to prevent soil erosion,



COCONUT-BASED products are a vital source of income for Hernani farmers

because of the bright prospects.

Geotextile nets

Tagon said that the coconut processing plant produces around 200 rolls of geotextile nets a week.

"The size of one roll is one meter by 50 meters. At the moment, however, the price dropped to P28 per square meter," he added.

The mayor said nearly 200 families are involved in the production of geotextile nets, with 40 families operating the hand looms and another 160 families operating the twining machines.

"That is aside from the 43 daily workers in the plant," he added.

Geotextiles are derived from the fibrous husks of coconuts. The fiber extracted from discarded coconut husks, which is commonly called coco coir, had to undergo further twining and weaving for it to become a geotextile.

Coco geotextile mats or nets are widely used as protective covers for soil and slopes.

The mayor said they wanted to expand the plant's production capacity by purchasing a bigger decorticating machine but this was shelved due to lack of fund.

Job opportunities

At present, the plant produces only 1.5 tons of coconut fiber a day.

Tagon said the plant was set up to provide job opportunities to the town's residents, particularly the farmers.

He added that several government agencies have been helping them in the setting up and operation of the plant, among them the Office of the President through Presidential Assistant Victor Domingo and the Departments of Agrarian Reform, Trade and Industry and Science and Technology.

At present, the mayor said the group has tied up with the Department of Agriculture to provide the technology in making organic fertilizer using coconut dust.

Other potential ventures include making laundry soaps and other coco-based products, Tagon said.

He said the group also plans to set aside two hectares in every barangay, with one hectare for the Gawad Kalinga housing project and the other for a livelihood center where residents could earn a living by making coconut-based products.

PSBank . . .

From page B3-1

"For this year's awards, we are looking for the best men and women in the police force who are able to deliver on their sworn duties with integrity, credibility and by being [trustworthy]," Garcia said.

"They will go through a stringent selection process that includes documentation of achievements, background checks and a panel interview with a distinguished board of judges representing various sectors of society," he explained.

Since 1993, the Metrobank Foundation has been providing support to programs benefiting dependents of uniformed personnel of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, in recognition of their role in nation building. This support took the form mainly of grants to the PNP.

In 1999, the foundation set up an endowment fund of P10 million specifically for the recognition of outstanding policemen.

Using the technology and experience it has gained in the conduct of the search for outstanding teachers, the foundation decided to recognize selected individuals who have excelled from among the ranks of the police force.

The goal is to bring back public confidence and respect to the PNP.

More importantly, the awards is also a way for the community to show its appreciation to the best members of the police force, whose image has declined in recent years.

"If you look at the profiles of some of the nominees we have, your opinion will change," Garcia said. "You'd really be surprised at how good they are."

Registration is extended.

Regular rate for registration is extended until October 31, 2007. Extra days to get P2,000 off.

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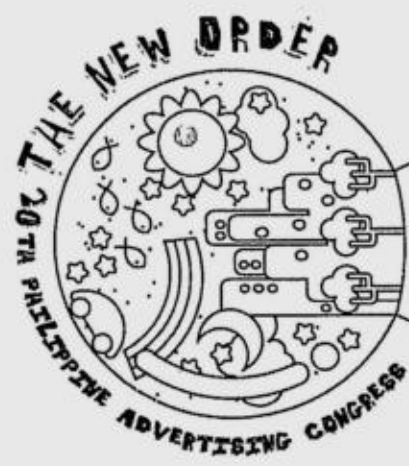
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Insurance firm lauds 3 model Filipinos

THE PIONEER GROUP BELIEVES IN the Filipino's capacity for excellence.

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These are the Loboc Children's Choir, chef Ronnie Macuja and Dr. Josette Talamera-Biyo.

The Loboc Children's Choir is composed of 30 students from the Loboc Central Elementary School in Bohol who already have a considerable level of achievement even before reaching the age of 14.

Under the directorship of Alma Fernando-Taldo, their conductor and musical director, this choir is a three-time national champion for the Children's Choir category of the "Philippine National Music Competitions for Young Artists."

The choir also won both the Gold Medal for the children's choir category and the Europe and its Songs 2003 Cup at the International Folksong Choir Festival held in Barcelona.

Chef Ronnie Macuja, on the other hand, is a three-time gold medalist of the International Salon Culinaire competition in Thailand.

Starting as an apprentice in 1983, Macuja rose up the ranks quickly but not without his own set of struggles.

He is now the executive chef at the Sala



DR. JOSETTE Talamera Biyo

Bua restaurant in Phuket Cabana, Thailand, a restaurant which has won the Best Restaurant award from the Thailand Tatler for three consecutive years.

From an apprentice chef in the Philippines, to his culinary adventures in New Zealand and Thailand, Macuja is a true example of a Filipino that strives for excellence.

Dr. Josette Talamera Biyo, meanwhile, is a multi-awarded educator who started as a classroom teacher for a small school in Iloilo.

The dedication she put into her work was rewarded several times over—first with the Metrobank Foundation Award in 1997 for outstanding teaching; then The Outstanding Young Filipino Award in 1998; and finally the 2002 Intel Excellence in Teaching Award given in Kentucky, USA, which brought Biyo worldwide recognition.

The lives of all three Model Filipinos are living proof of the Filipino's unlimited potential. In much the same way, Pioneer Group has striven to be a model Filipino enterprise.

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People, Events & Products

Cebu closes technology gap with Manila

IT TAKES SIX TO 10 MONTHS FOR new technology in Manila to be available in Cebu.

"As the most important center of commerce and trade outside of Luzon, most Cebuanos find this simply unacceptable," explains Abenson Avant's managing president Walter Lim.

The opening of Abenson Avant is expected to change the electronics landscape in Cebu by closing the technology gap with Manila. Five hundred square feet of cutting-edge innovations have just been opened in the Queen City of the South by the electronic superstore. Cebuano gadget lovers—from the high-tech bohemian to the buttoned down geek—can now experience the best-of-breed audio, video, gaming and household technologies without having to wait or travel to Manila.

A company under the Abenson

Group of Companies, Abenson Avant is the "result of Abenson's commitment to have the most number of Filipinos maximize their use and enjoyment of gadgets through a truly unique shopping experience," says Lim.

The newest store of the Abenson Avant franchise delivers to Cebuanos the same pioneering retail concept that made the Abenson Avant the resource for leading electronic innovations in the Philippines. With a wide selection of the world's leading electronics available months in advance of other retailers, gadget lovers of all types in Cebu can completely experience their favorite devices first-hand. Because products are fully accessible to customers, users can test, compare and explore any and all products to find the best value for their money. The same minimalist, all-

white interior and unobtrusive sales service Abenson Avant is known for provide customers with a trademark novel, interactive retail experience.

Avant-garde products are now in fashion with Filipinos thanks to Abenson Avant. The company introduced the concept of upscale electronic boutiques popular in cities such as New York and Tokyo when it opened the country's first lifestyle store at Greenbelt in Makati.

For more information about latest electronics visit Abenson Avant Cebu at the 3rd Level, New Wing, Ayala Center Cebu or call (032) 232-5960.

Other branches are at 2nd Level, TriNoma, Quezon City and at Greenbelt 4 in Ayala Center, Makati. Call 901-3550 to 52, 758-2315 to 20, or fax 901-3553 and 758-2318.



MVP GRACES BEST CENTER SBP-PASSERELLE OPENING

BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny Pangilinan was the special guest when the Milo-sponsored BEST Center Small Basketeers of the Philippines-Passerelle tournament kicked off its 22nd season recently. Pangilinan gave an inspirational talk and did the ceremonial toss and was joined by BAP-SBP vice chair Ricky Vargas, BEST Center founder Nic Jorge, and Small Basketeers president Larry Marasigan during the opening rites. The long-running nationwide youth development league is part of the commitment of Milo to promote sports in the grassroots level. It

is also in line with the country's long-term preparations for the 2010 Youth Olympics. Games in the 22nd Milo-sponsored SBP-Passerelle tournament will be held every Sunday afternoon at Xavier Sports Complex. Shown is BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny Pangilinan doing the ceremonial toss with BEST Center founder Nic Jorge, Small Basketeers president Larry Marasigan, BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas vice chair Ricky Vargas (partly hidden) and players from Ateneo de Manila and San Bada College.



7-ELEVEN NOW IN MALLS

The newest 7-Eleven franchise in SM Clark recently made waves as it successfully opened up a new market in the form of mall-goers for the world-renowned convenience store. Operated by Mr and Ms Hazel Marie Salta, the new store allows mall-goers and other customers living near the area to experience 24-hour convenience store shopping. The SM Clark Franchise store approach is now seen as the start of a new trend of 7-Eleven franchise locators who might seek to replicate its success. Already, a soon-to-open 7-Eleven

store at the 1 E-Commerce building beside the Mall of Asia will get a chance to tap the throng of shoppers frequenting the Philippine's largest shopping mall. Currently, 7-Eleven boasts a total of 299 stores, 159 of which are company-owned and located in major parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Areas available for franchise include Baguio, Laguna, Cavite, Manila, Makati and Quezon City. For inquiries, call 726-9968, 0920-9508651 or log on to www.7-eleven.com.ph.

Antel Spa Residences rewards with 50% discount

ANTEL LAND HOLDINGS, THE COUNTRY'S premier developer of the ground-breaking spa-inspired lifestyle tower Antel Spa Residences, recently launched an innovative reward system that will allow buyers to enjoy up to 50-percent discount on unit price simply by referring relatives and friends to Antel's lifestyle property specialists.

Dubbed Antel Rewards Program (ARP), the new system was envisioned to be the ultimate perk for buyers and property investors seeking to enjoy the offerings and potentials of the new lifestyle tower.

"ARP means buyers will get to enjoy a new lifestyle at half the price, simply by providing us with successful referrals who might also be interested in buying a unit at Antel Spa Residences," said Antel director for sales Miguel Gascon.

Gascon explained that ARP is the best form of reward that the company can offer, since buyers will get to enjoy savings in the form of accumulated discounts up to 50 percent of the actual unit price that they are purchasing.

"We all have our own network of family and friends, and most of the time we are the first to know if someone close to us are interested in buying a condo-home. With ARP, we can now cash in on that knowledge by introducing our 'contact' to an Antel lifestyle specialist," said Gascon.

Conduit

According to Gascon, the one who refers will only act as a conduit and the actual sales pitch will be handled by the Antel lifestyle property specialist, who will appraise the referred buyer on the various features of Antel Spa Residences, touted to be the country's first premier residential enclave dedicated to the concepts of health and wellness.

"We found out that the best way to convince potential buyers about the merits and features of a new condo tower is by informing them that you have also bought a unit yourself. And in this aspect, our existing buyers have the distinct advantage via the ARP, they have the confidence of telling their family members and friends

on why they should put their money into Antel Spa Residences, because they will also be enjoying the same features and amenities," said Gascon.

Among the many amenities, services and features soon-to-be-offered by the newest lifestyle residential tower along Makati Avenue are spa-centered facilities including a Wellness Academy, a sky Infinity pool, fitness center, and various shops and clinics devoted to health and wellness.

Antel Spa Residences is a Full Service Residential Suites (FSRS) pioneered by Antel Land Holdings, which allows residents to enjoy five-star hotel-style services and amenities such as concierge, laundry, housekeeping, transport, formal reception, room service, carwash, unit maintenance and professional leasing.

For inquiries about the Antel Rewards Program, call 896-8888 or visit www.antel.com.ph. Interested parties may also visit The Antel Venue Lounge at 5343 Gen. Luna Street corner Makati Avenue, Makati City.

October sees introduction of TwinPhone

A CELLPHONE LIKE NO OTHER IS GOING to hit the market this October—the TwinPhone TPH500, the first dual-faced mobile phone in the country that allows two SIM cards to function simultaneously.

The TwinPhone TPH500, invented by Alman Tahir of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and exclusively distributed locally by TwinPhone Inc Philippines, has all the features of the usual cell phone—SMS, calling, calendar, alarm clock, etc.—and more. TwinPhone's slogan, "we make things easy", is evident in the phone's functions.

TwinPhone TPH500 is the only mobile phone that can be used as three-way calling by simply pressing the speaker function, without requesting the service provider for conference call.

The TwinPhone, true to its "twin" concept, has two cameras, two MP3 and two MP4 for music and video playing and recording. Each face of the phone has a 1.8-

inch colored screen, and a tri-band. The phone also has one USB interface recharge and Bluetooth functions. Indeed, it has the power of two!

More than that, the SMS function dis-

plays both English and Arabic. The TwinPhone can be used for email and can also support WAP explorer. The TwinPhone is powered by just one lithium battery, and has a long standby time of 100 hours or more.

Allyson Artes, CEO and president of TwinPhone Inc Philippines, said the TwinPhone is perfect for professionals, frequent travelers, and businessmen.

The phone units will be available this month at all Semicon outlets nationwide, in Celbius phone shops in Cebu, and from other authorized dealers.

Learn more about the TwinPhone at www.twinphone.co.uk, or visit its headquarters at the Artes Tower, 1956 Pilar Hidalgo Lim, Malate, Manila. You may also reach its distributors at 0928-2966945, 0905-3268903, 0922-6015672 or e-mail asaclub@yahoo.com or allyson@twinphone.co.uk.



AMAN Tahir and Allyson Artes

Atlas Copco nears target

ATLAS COPCO PHILIPPINES Inc, THE leading provider of industrial productivity solutions in the Philippines, is bound to surpass its 2007 sales target by a huge sum if it can sustain its bullish run as reflected in the company's 3rd quarter sales report.

As of September, the company already achieved P775.205 million, 27 percent higher compared to projection year-to-date. During the same period last year, Atlas Copco sold P593.228 million. By the end of September, Atlas Copco bested last year's performance by posting a 30.6-percent increase in sales.

Atlas Copco made P727.126 million in 2006. This was 10 percent higher compared to the sales projection which was P659.30 million. The company's sales projection for 2007 is P815.370 million. This is 24 percent more than last year's sales projection but the com-

pany is poised to surpass this figure.

Atlas Copco Philippines Inc is a wholly owned subsidiary of Atlas Copco AB of Sweden. Since its establishment in 1967, it has grown to be a leading provider of industrial productivity solutions in the Philippines.

"With our Compressor Business Area, we are looking at achieving a remarkable P1 billion by end of December which will be a milestone for the company," declares Jonnie Regis, general manager of Atlas Copco Philippines Inc.

Globally, it has three business lines, viz compressor technique, construction and mining technique and industrial technique. It is ISO 9001:2000 compliant as certified by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance. The company is also working towards OHSAS 18000 certification before the end of the year.

Visit Atlas Copco at www.atlascopco.com.



GLORIOUS FILIPINO FOOD AT JAYMI'S GRILL

Jaymi's Grill means Filipino Cuisine at its best. It used to be located at The Fort, beside Par 43 mini golf, but has recently moved to 802 Pasay Road Makati, near Don Bosco Church. People have been missing their old favorite resto, and they can finally feast on the specialties again—Sisig, Crispy Pata, Kilawing Tangilog, Inihaw na Liempo, Mango Freeze, and try new ones like Pinalutong na Hito, Catfish Mango Salad (as shown), and Banana Q ala mode. Its cozy and relaxed ambience makes it the perfect venue for baptisms, birthdays, weddings, corporate functions and other big parties. It has function rooms for up to 70 and air conditioned/al fresco seating up to 300. With basement parking and a kiddie playground, Jaymi's Grill really does elevate the Filipino dining experience a notch above the rest. For inquiries and reservations, call 815-2741 or 815-7990.



OMBUDSMAN AT FORUM

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez (center) listens to Prosecution and Monitoring Bureau acting director Elvira Chua talk on the laws on bribery, libel and other mass media laws at a sectoral briefing-forum with the information officers of participating government agencies conducted recently by the Office of the Ombudsman at the Sulo Hotel in Quezon City. The event was part of

the OMB's ongoing information dissemination campaign on its role in the fight against corruption which is a joint undertaking of the OMB and the European Commission with the theme, "Ombudsman: Katiwalian Ay Labanan, Maging Tapat sa Bayan". Also shown are (from left): Communication Concepts Inc president Albert Adriano and assistant Ombudsman Evelyn Ballton.



CEBUANA LHUILLIER TOP EXECS GRADUATE FROM AIM

A number of key Cebuana Lhuillier executives recently graduated from AIM's Management Development Program (MDP). This six-week course primed the participating executives for personal transformation in the strategy and leadership of the business, industry, country and Asia in the global context. Aside from successfully finishing the course, Jerry Orlina and Veronica Vallentes also received special citations as members of the best performing team for management flight simulator and best performing team in a business management simulation activity, respectively.

Shown are P. Lhuillier Insurance Agency general manager Jonathan Batangan, internal audit division manager Jerry Orlina, personnel and organization development division manager Veronica Vallentes, regional manager Rizaldy Ranjo, legal services division manager lawyer Luis Velasquez, executive assistant to the CEO Danny Francisco, regional manager Felix Contapay, Cebuana Lhuillier Services Corp general manager Fernando Bacungan and human resource division manager Vicente Turdanes during MDP's closing ceremony.

Philippine BiD Challenge to hold marketplace

THE PHILIPPINE BID CHALLENGE, an online business plan competition, will exhibit the top 45 business plans submitted from all over the country on Oct. 22, 2007, from 1:30 p.m. onwards at the AIM Conference Center in Legaspi Village, Makati City.

The event is also a venue where the BiD Challenge entrepreneurs and potential investors and business partners can exchange experiences and explore collaboration. The best business plans shall also be recognized in an awarding ceremony later that day.

Leading the marketplace are Philippine BiD Challenge and SGV & Co. chair and managing partner David Balangue, with other members of the board representing Cit-



THE OPENING of Kenny Rogers Trinoma Mall was led by Rosalina Siy and Bernadette Siy of Roasters Phils. (front row, third and fourth from right)

igroup, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Nestle Philippines, Philippine Daily Inquirer, DTI-Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development and the Foundation for a Sustainable Society Inc.

The Philippine BiD Challenge is a fully localized version of the International BiD Challenge, an international online business plan competition that combines income generating business with poverty reduction in a developing country. It is organized by the

Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) and the Business in Development Network. For details, log on to www.bidnetwork.org/philippines.

Kenny Rogers in Trinoma

Kenny Rogers Roasters recently opened its newest branch at the Trinoma Mall in Quezon City. The blessing of the restaurant's 36th branch preceded the opening and

was followed by the traditional ribbon-cutting rites led by Roasters Philippines' chair Mrs. Rosalina Siy; group marketing director Karen N. Cosico and operations manager Marissa San Diego.

Located at the ground level (Level M1), Kenny Rogers Trinoma features a fresh look—from the façade to the restaurant's interior. The menu board reflects the freshness of Kenny's dishes while colorful murals and graphic posters of various food offerings adorn the walls.

"There is a wide range of exciting choices, all deliciously healthy, and you get to enjoy your meal in a fresh and relaxing environment. If you want good food that's good for you, come visit us at Kenny Rogers Trinoma," says Cosico.

The complete menu, which is available for all-day dining, features an extensive variety, including eight entrée options.

New distribution system

Valiant & McKenzie Distribution, a nationwide distribution group for global brands, has signed up with ABM Computech Enterprises for the implementation of Sage MAS 500 ERP for its financial, distribution and warehousing needs.

In choosing the new system, Valiant & McKenzie considered

its multitasking capabilities, workflow integrations, add-on features, flexibility and powerful reporting.

ABM Computech was chosen for the project because of its solid experience in implementing solutions. Live implementation of the new system is expected to run by January 2008. Such prospect will enable Valiant & McKenzie to properly streamline business processes.



(FROM left) Ferman Sison, corporate IT manager, Patrick Sy, VP Maribeth Baba, director for Sales and Services of ABM, Christine Fondevilla, CEO of ABM, Ramon Sy, president, VP Andre Sy and VP Samuel Sy.

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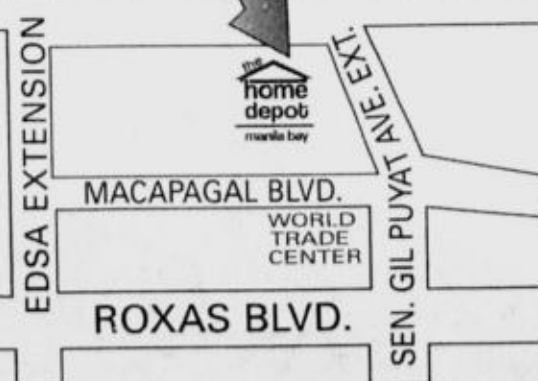
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Home Interior Superstore Offers Up to 24 months Zero (0%) Interest on Select Furniture Items

The Home Depot Group also inaugurates second Home Interior Superstore in Ortigas Home Depot.



The Home Interior Superstore is a store-in-store and one stop shop furniture haven owned and operated by Manila's fastest growing chain of home centers. Last October 17, the second branch of its pioneering Home Interior Superstore was formally inaugurated.

Located at the mezzanine floor of Ortigas Home Depot, it is touted to be the metro's largest furniture hub with a combined furniture retail area of over 6,000 square meters including other furniture retailers inside the depot. It is the latest addition to Home Depot Group's family of company owned retail enterprises. The Home Interior Superstore forms part of the growing number of furniture shops located in its mezzanine floor. Among them are Blims Fine Furniture, Contempo Designs, INDEX Furniture, Interior Design Options (IDO), Ortigas Furniture and Victoria Mondiale.

Aside from a wide variety of ready made furniture designs and themes to suit every lifestyle, the superstore accepts made to order furniture for the most discerning customers. A plethora of home décor and accessories also offers furniture buyers matching pieces to complement their furniture showcase. The sprawling furniture center is targeting home owners who are currently building their homes or doing renovation projects.

Since buying furniture can be one of the most budget consuming expenses in home renovations, homeowners can now avail of zero-interest installment payments from 3 months up to 24 months on selected furniture items in the two Home Interior Superstores using their BPI, Citibank, Diners and HSBC credit cards.

The first Home Interior Superstore was inaugurated last June at the Manila Bay Home Depot, the fourth member of the Home Depot Group's growing chain of home centers. Similarly located at the mezzanine floor, it also has two escalators that lead customers to a wide array of modern, classic and contemporary furniture and home décor.



The Home Interior Superstore is just one of several retail concepts introduced to the home owners and builders market. Also recently introduced was its Loyalty Card Program for frequent buyers. Now, customers can accumulate points for rewards in all its outlets in Alabang-Westgate, Baliuag, Manila Bay and Ortigas just by dropping by its Customer Sales Service counter and apply for a loyalty card. Another innovative program is the HOME PRICE GUARANTEE Program, assuring its customers that they can avail of the most competitive prices in the market or the customer can claim a refund on the price difference. With several more outlets targeted to be opened in the near future, a new Home Depot is slated to be opened in San Fernando, Pampanga next year.

BUSINESSMonday

Meeting of the (business) minds

Top executives discuss vital issues during 2-day meeting

IT IS NOT EVERY DAY THAT chief executive officers of big global companies get to meet and discuss management and leadership issues with their counterparts from top Philippine companies.

Yet, that's what the recently concluded 6th Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) just did.

The two-day conference held at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel brought no less than 900 of the country's top executives (mostly CEOs, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, and chief information officers) face to face with top-notch executives of global firms.

Together in one stage were Christina Gold, CEO of Western Union, who talked about migration as a choice and not a necessity, and what the company is doing to improve the lives of the families of overseas Filipino workers.

There was Frederic Neumann of the Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corp., who shared his insights of the decoupling of the Asian economies from the US economy and how the growing influence of China should be viewed in the long-term.

Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty, the cardiologist who treated Mother Teresa, related how his hospital has reached out to the remotest areas of India to help heal the poor people through telemedicine and how heart surgeries can be made affordable through application of in-

novative operating systems and procedures.

And Brian Tumpowsky, a principal of Diamond Consulting, a US firm advising buyers of outsourced services, discussed the trends in outsourcing and how the Philippines could take advantage of the changing perceptions of buyers and the evolution of outsourced services.

Former finance secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, now with Credit Suisse, showed how lending decisions of his bank considers the project's impact on the environment and on the improvement in the lives of the community it serves.

The Bangkok Bank Executive Chair, Khun Sithi Piti Annuy, explained the vision of the bank to be the leading bank in the region and the logic behind its expansion to China, India and Vietnam.

Arthur Tan, CEO of Integrated Microelectronic, an Ayala company, showed the need for the Philippine company to acquire manufacturing facilities in China and Vietnam and probably Russia to sell Philippine brand to US customers.

The chair of this year's conference and MAP's immediate past president, Evelyn R. Singson, admitted that a conference as

big as this with 13 CEO speakers was no mean feat.

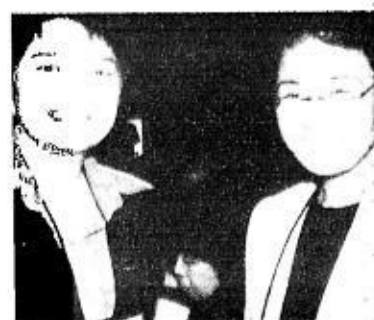
She said the organizing committee started to work on this event for the past 12 months to insure that the invited speakers could accommodate the conference in their busy schedules particularly since it involved long-haul travel for some. But with the Philippines emerging as a favorable investment destination, the invited CEOs did not hesitate to come over and see the country's business environment.

The MAP gives one big CEO International Conference each year. The past conferences were well attended, but the partici-

pants in this year's conference were unanimous in saying that it was the best they had attended so far.

The topics were very timely and the speakers gave their fresh and imaginative viewpoints on how they prepared themselves and their companies to respond to the fast changing environment, the advances in technology and the evolving social and political activism worldwide.

A book on the conference proceedings and open forum discussions will be published by MAP and will be made available to the public.



FIGARO CEO Chit Juan (left) and ABS-CBN's Maria Ressa



NABI Saleh and Evelyn Singson, chair of the MAP conference.



SEAIR'S Avelino Zapanta (left) and Fern Pena, MOF Co. (Subic), Inc.



FREDERICK Neumann, HSBC



FUJI director Toshio Arima



RAJA Azmi, EVP Air Asia



DR. DEVI Shetty



JOSE Cuisia, CEO, Philamlife



TUNDE Fapunwa, Bayantel



SSS chief Cora dela Paz



VICKY Garchitorea



AT DR. DEVI Prasad Shetty teleconference: (from left) Dr. Juanita Zagal, Dr. Liza Pastores, Dr. Lourdes Diaz and Dr. Von Meldrich Gonda.



IMI's Arthur Tan



ING's Renato de Guzman



(From left) Sun's Cynthia Mamon, Western Union Head Christina Gold, and consultant Brian Tumpowsky



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LIFESTYLE

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MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Of masks and real life

By Jade Snow, Contributor
Photos by Melvyn Calderon

BACOLOD CITY—“Club Majica at Orange” is this year’s Masskara—the Negrense artists’ own contribution to the famous annual Masskara festival, which draws crowds and drowning life’s tragedies albeit for a moment.

But instead of just depicting the good side of life, as what the festival’s street-dancing and merrymaking are wont to do, the “Club Majica at Orange” exhibit breathes life into the Negrense artists’ rendition of real life and humanity.

The exhibiting artists are Richard Aguilon, Edmund Bacia, José Carreon Jr., Bary Cervantes, Tot-c Co, Inocentes Cristales, Giovanni Demasu-ay, Rex Falcuntin, Joe Geraldo, Israel Mark Gonzalez, Jovito Hecita,

José Inocencio Jr., Rolf Lachat, Alden Macazar, Leo Mahinay, Laurence Mangaw, Emilio Montelibano, Manny Montelibano, Santiago Onatin, Norman Posecion, Leah Remolado, Rianne Salvarita, Georgette Sanchez, Susanito Sarnate and Nonon Yee.

The concept is anchored on a structural theme that reflects the artists’ take on humanity as expressed through the fundamental female form. The basic female form is used as the starting point and a necessary space limitation, yet the works don’t reflect any gender or cultural limitations.

“Bayi,” for example, a papier-

OF MASKS/C2



IMPROMPTU. Majica street dancers add color and fun to the streets of Bacolod City.

‘Club Majica at Orange’ exhibit breathes life into the Negrense artists’ rendition of real life and humanity

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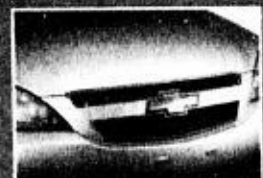
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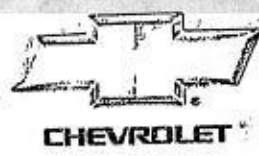


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BACOLOD'S PRIDE. The "Santo Sebastian" collection against Bacolod City's century-old San Sebastian Cathedral, built in 1876



Art and martyrdom

Photos by Melvyn Calderon

SANTO SEBASTIAN" IS A unique group exhibition focused on one subject matter: the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, said to have been killed during the anti-Christian persecutions by the Roman emperor Diocletian in the third century.

His image was brought to Negros by the Order of the Augustinian Recollects. Since then he has become the patron saint of the Diocese of Bacolod.

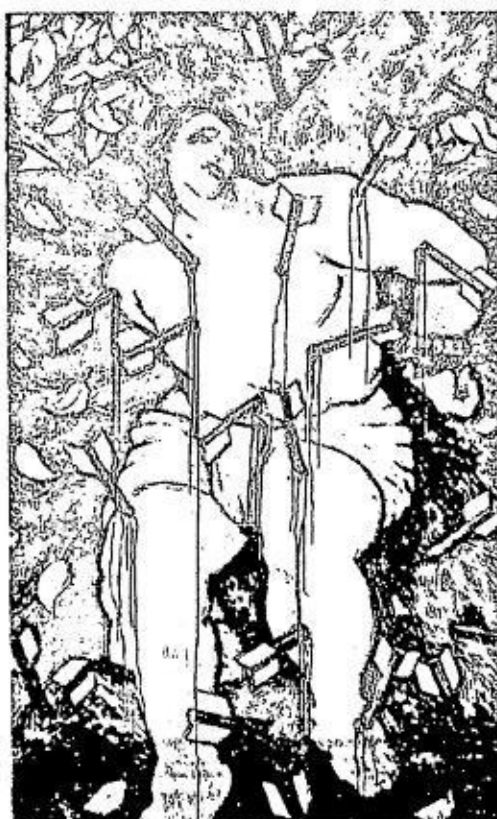
In art and literature, he is commonly depicted as one tied to a post and shot with arrows, an ordeal he miraculously survived before his martyrdom.

The auspices of the Bacolod City Bishop's Palace is a perfect backdrop to the inspired works of Dennis Ascalon, José Carreon Jr., Charlie Co, Inocentes Ting Cristales, Joe Geraldo, Israel Gonzales, Fred Juson, Raymond Legaspi, Rodney Martinez, Tristram Miravalles, Rianne Salvarita, Roger Salvarita, Leah Samson, Tony Tejado and Orville Visitation.

The concept of "Santo Sebastian" springs from the devotion of this member of the Imperial Roman army, who was among the most frequently depicted saints by late Gothic and Renaissance artists.

Athlete of Christ

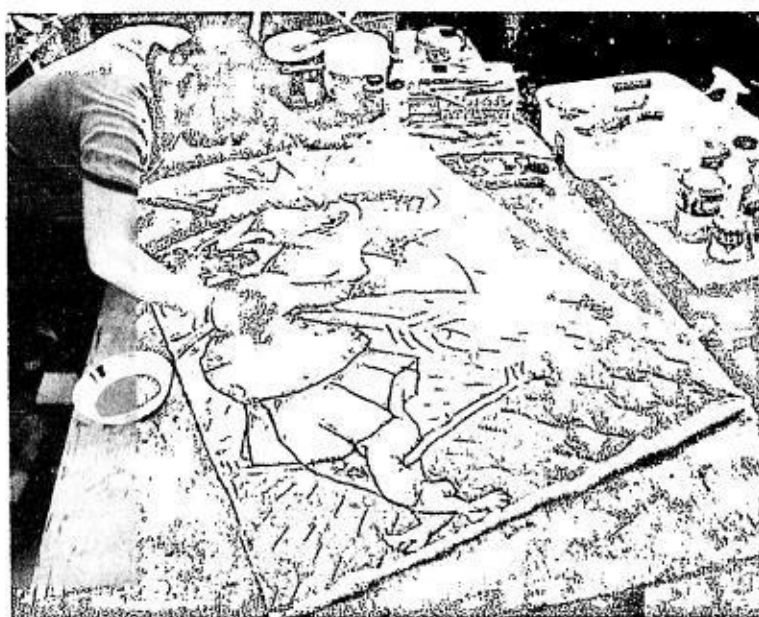
The opportunity to show a semi-nude male, often in a contorted pose, also made Sebastian a favorite subject. Details of his martyrdom may invite skepticism but then



"SAN SEBASTIAN," by Raymond Legaspi

his was a life generally believed to reveal Christian practices, so that he was a saint viewed as an *athleta Christi* or "athlete of Christ," and a "guardian of the heavens."

The exhibition's major challenge to the artists was to relate the spiritual nature of the martyred saint to present-day realities, which, more than ever, probably require the help of more saints like San Sebastian.



DENNIS Ascalon works on "Super Basti."



"CARROZA ni San Sebastian," by Charlie Co



"SAN SEBASTIAN Tended by the Holy Women," by Leah Samson

The exhibition's major challenge to the artists was to relate the spiritual nature of the martyred saint to present-day realities

It Co who came up with the "Santo Sebastian" concept, inspired by the creative initiative of local artists during the mid-'80s, when members of the Arts Association of Bacolod painted the 14 Stations of the Cross for the Church of San Antonio Abad in Bacolod City.

"Santo Sebastian" is also the visual artists' response to the encouragement of Henry Streegan to initiate a pre-diamond year exhibition as a prelude to next year's celebration of the 75th year of the Diocese of Bacolod.

The collection is unique because of the different versions of the iconic image of Sebastian, from classical to ultra modern and contemporary. These are representative of the many generations and disciplines of Negrense artists.

Powerful works

The works of the Salvarita father and son are a clear example. The father's 15th-century classical lines stand in stark contrast with the contemporary surreal style of his son, as both paint their faith in oil on canvas.

Martinez' "St. Sebastian," in muted golden hues, reflects the artist's perception that "what is important is the way, for after all there is more to creation than the end."

Visitation's "Sebastian Lives" portrays that "all encounters in life are lessons for the maturing spirit."

The show also features two powerful figurative works from young artists Gonzales and Miravalles. These unpretentious sons of Bacolod aim to be honest voices in the fields of visual crafting.

Miravalles says his work "depicts the reality of most Filipino people who are struggling in their daily lives and who have become martyrs for their family even in the middle of conflict... They hold on to the faith that they believe will save them."

One of the exhibition's highlights is Co's "Carroza ni San Sebastian," where the dark-skinned image of the martyr is set in a burning, war-ravaged landscape in contemporary times. The modern representation can be likened to that of the image of Nazareno of Quiapo, to which the Filipino can relate closer because it veers away from the traditional Caucasian religious images.

Co's work comments on the sacrificial nature of soldiers whose lives are forever on the line amid never-ending battles.

"Santo Sebastian" is one exhibition where the hands of artists have lent the hues of contemporary realities to a still-relevant and hauntingly beautiful tale of faith.

Jade Snow, Contributor

Of masks and real life

From page C1

mâché by Laurence Mangao is clearly about the Filipino woman.

Says Mangao: "A lot of women are in circumstances of pain, verbal, physical, emotional, but they learn to live through it and survive."

An installation by Susanito Sarnate, "Steel Alive," was very much inspired by his wife. Sarnate says he is amazed by how his wife has managed to juggle her work in the house both as mother and wife—that he wonders why she's still alive.

"Steel Alive" is my tribute to my beloved wife Rosemarie," he says.

The first Masskara festival was held in 1980, as the city's attempt to cope with the tragedy caused by the 1979 sinking of luxury liner Don Juan as well as the suffering of Negrenses in the midst of the sugar crisis then.

The masks gave color to their otherwise dreary lives. And through the years, tourists from all over the world have been joining the festival of masks.

In the last four years, however, Negrense artists have been reconstructing the relevance of Masskara within the context of Bacolod City's contemporary realities. And the exhibit is proof that the artists' community is very much alive in the City of Smiles.

The project was an initiative of Silver



"HUMAN Trash," mixed media by Joe Geraldo

Masskara Organization, which wanted to highlight the festivities in keeping with the spirit of celebration the community of artists started in 1980. It is but fitting that the same creative hands are harnessed once



"BIG WISH. Equality? (=?)," by José Buglas Carreon, mixed media of painted wood and resin

CLUB Majica artists at Orange: Tot-C Co, Georgette Sanchez, Sarnate, Leah Remolado, Richard Aguilon, Santiago Onatin and Carreon. Standing: SM Alexis Villarias, Manny Montelibano, Emilio Montelibano, soundman Neil Estrella, Alden Macazar, Mangao, Charlie Co, Rianne Salvarita, Nonon Yee, Norman Posecion, Cristales, Israel Mark Gonzales and Edmund Bacia



"ANGEL of Light and Dark," by Inocentes Ting Cristales, mixed media of mostly papier-mâché

again to give life to art through one community.

On Oct. 6, Silver Masskara Organization Inc. and Black Artists in Asia Association Inc. opened the group exhibition with a large collection of 25 installation works from 25 Negrense artists.

The opening night was done in a uniquely participative manner where guests became club members for a night and joined the live exhibition the minute they donned a mask.

It is an experience that fully utilizes the gallery spaces, including the courtyard area, which features a large mural by Bary Cervantes and Rianne Salvarita. The main gallery boasts a selection of contemporary installations in a mural backdrop of the classic Charlie Co arches, while the third-floor gallery presents a mix of thematic individual and group installations set up in a club backdrop designed by Emilio Montelibano.

The works, along with the video installation setup on the gallery landing and the works featured on the bridge, are intended to provoke people into questioning and reflecting on their own individual biases and perspectives—which otherwise will not have a place beneath the radiance of smiling masks.

"Club Magica at Orange" in Gallery Orange, Lope's Mandalagan Annex, Bacolod City, is on view Monday-Saturday, 2-9 p.m., until Oct. 30.

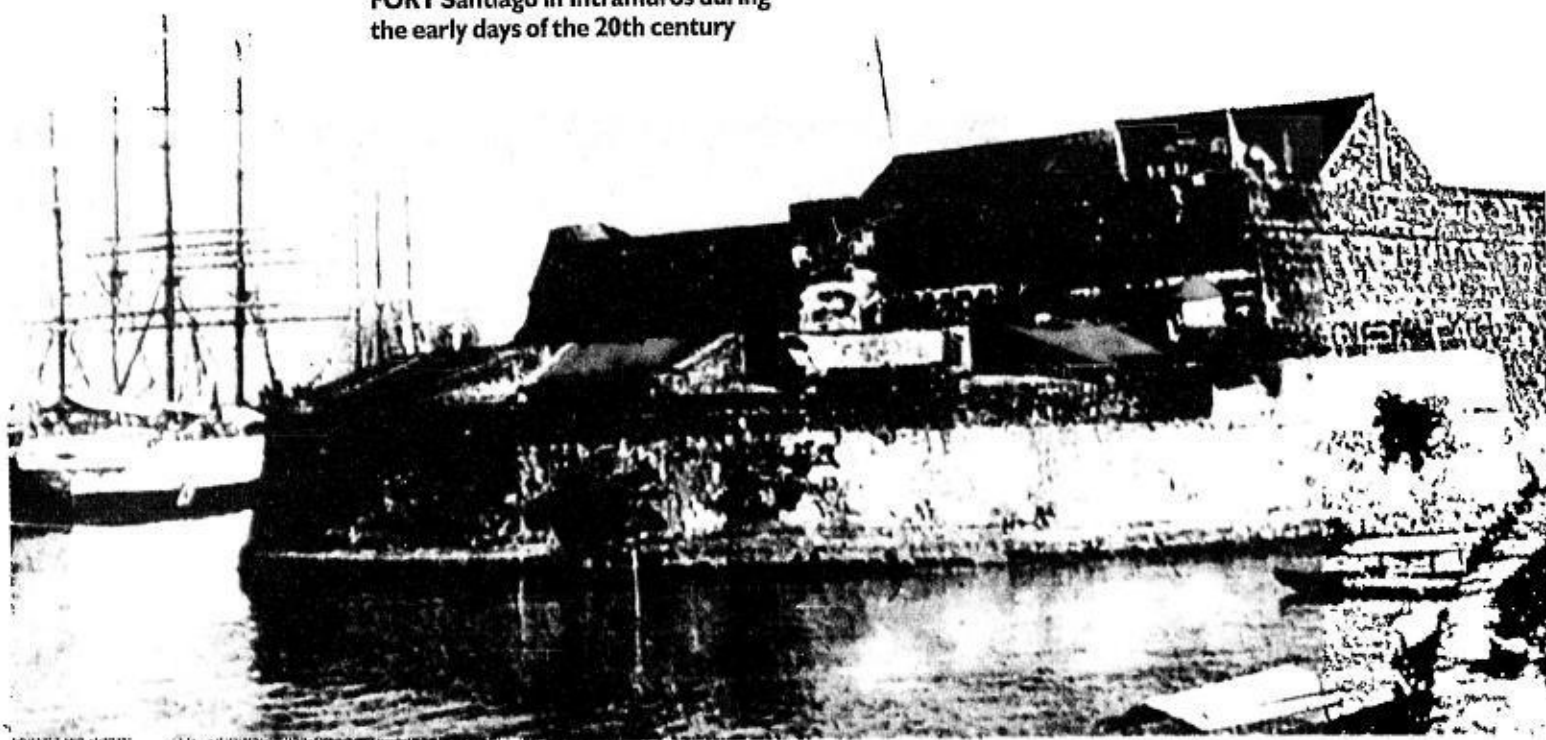


"STEEL Alive," by Susanito Sarnate, mixed-media installation of acrylic paint, terra-cotta, scrap iron and cement



"BAYI" (Woman), by Loren Mangao, papier-mâché

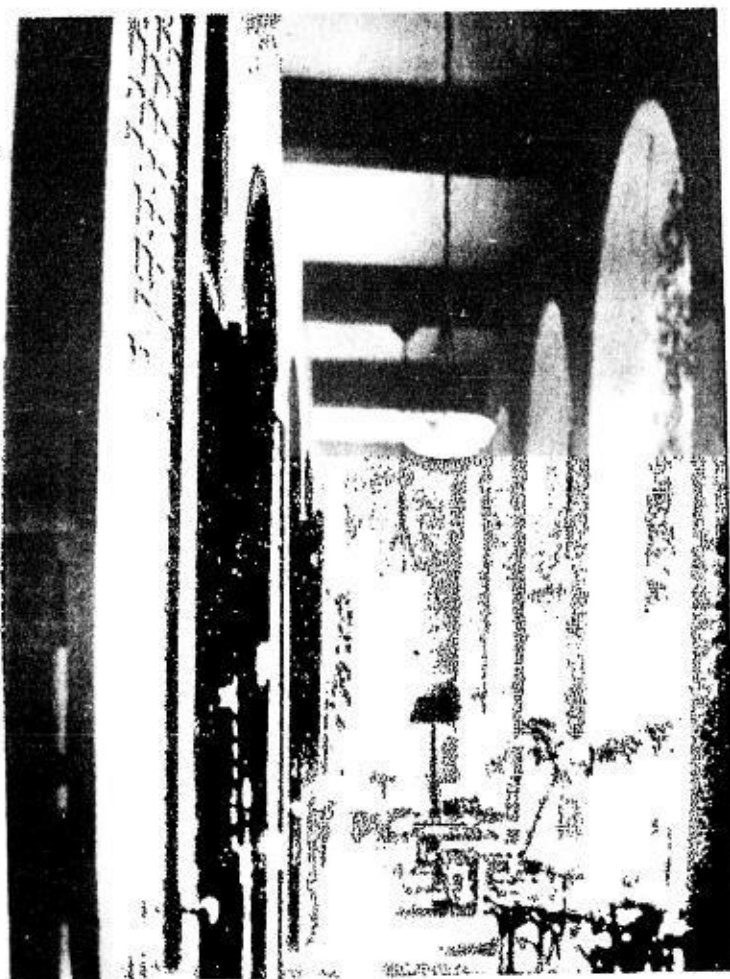
FORT Santiago in Intramuros during the early days of the 20th century



View From Manila Hotel, P.



EARLY 20th-century view of unobstructed Luneta and Manila Bay beyond is among the heritage postcards on exhibit at Museo ng Maynila.



A 1919 image of Army and Navy Club hallway

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon**Museo ng Maynila exhibit**

WHILE RESTORATION OF THE Army and Navy Club is in progress, Museo ng Maynila will open its doors. Its galleries on the ground floor are now open to the public.

Museo ng Maynila inaugurates its reopening with "Maynila Noon: The Curt Teich Postcard Collection, 1922-1949," 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, until Dec. 31.

Images on exhibit are from the Curt Teich Postcard Archives, which has the largest private collection of postcards in the US. The company, the world's largest postcard printer, was in existence from 1898 to 1978.

Curt Teich Company donated rare and unpublished images of Manila that have not been published or exhibited in the Philippines. The postcards on exhibit, photos taken from 1922-1949 when Manila was known as the Pearl of the Orient, offer a rare glimpse of Manila's youthful days during another era.

Curt Teich is no stranger to Manila. The company opened for local business in 1898 when American troops landed in the Philippines. In fact, the images are vintage American colonial. The American flag is seen flying over many landmarks that once symbolized Spanish supremacy.

The postcards journey through Manila, picking up images of the people, their streets, parks, churches, hotels, schools, and landmarks such as Fort Santiago, Escolta, Avenida Rizal. Of interest are images of the Luneta cluster of classic American colonial buildings that survive today: the Army and Navy Club, Manila Hotel, the Elks Club.

Admission to Museo ng Maynila is free.

For inquiries, information, or group bookings, please call 4050135 or 5245491.

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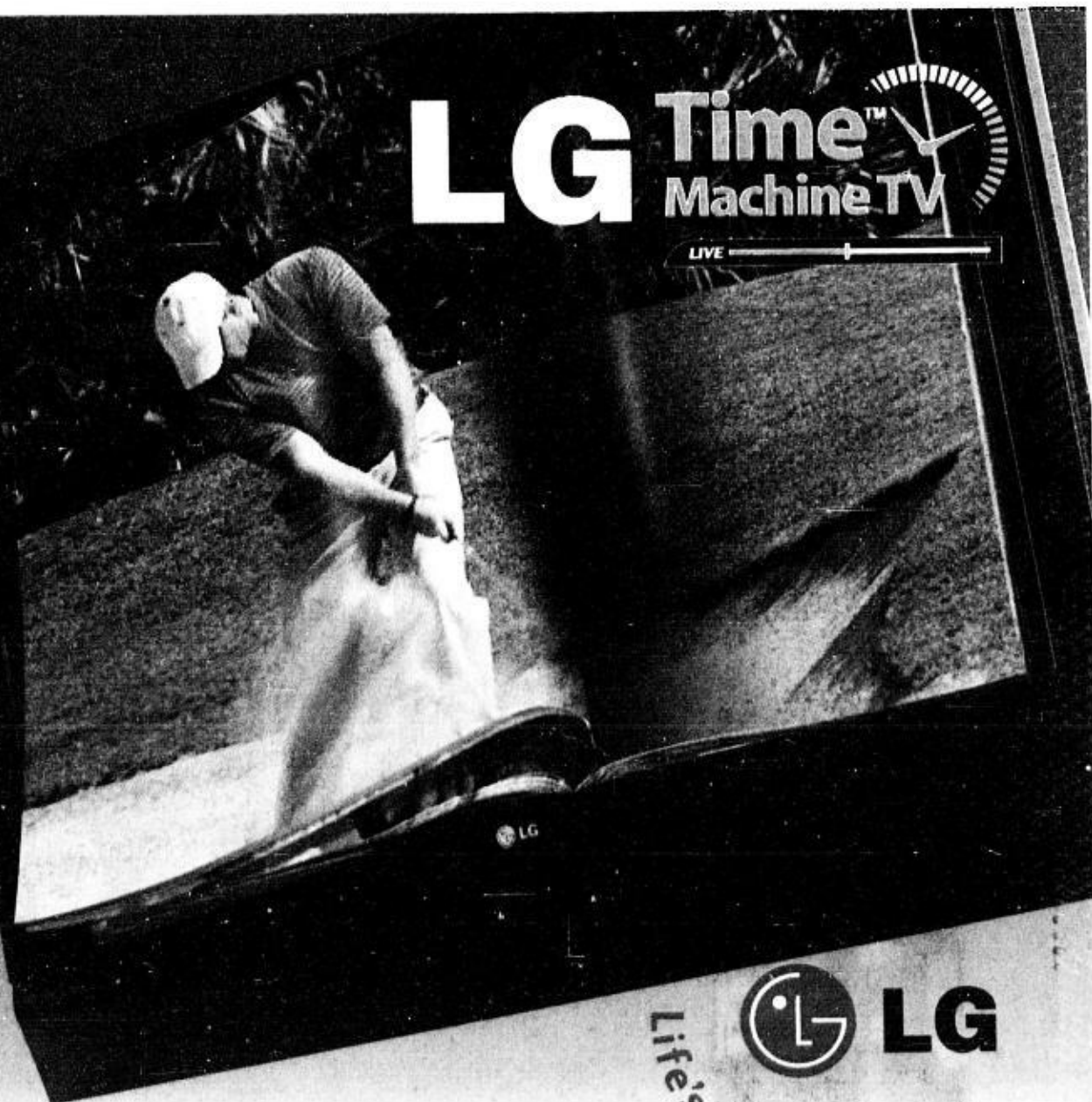
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Bach in the hands of young keyboard artists

A total
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applicants
joined
this year's
music tilt,
and 36
made it to
the finals

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

CAN YOUNG PIANISTS AGES 7-12 DO justice to the Baroque period exemplified by Johann Sebastian Bach, a German composer who died nearly 275 years ago?

Perhaps one got the answer during the winners' concert of the recently concluded Piano Teachers Guild of the Philippines (PTGP)-Philamlife 2007 Bach Competition.

The winners' concert showcased an array of young talents who surprisingly managed to have a clear grasp of the dynamics, articulation and execution of ornaments as practiced during the Baroque period.

"Their playing was just marvelous," said pianist Fr. Manuel Maramba, PTGP president who conducted a seminar on Bach interpretation months before the contest. "To be able to play Bach well, you need a discerning mind, a discerning ear and a good teacher. As you can see, the competition

was won by pupils under different teachers whose identities were not known to the four sets of jurors in the preliminaries. This means a good batch of young pianists has emerged and the quality of teaching has improved immensely."

(On second thought, I need not doubt the ability of the young to do Bach well way beyond their years. Cecile Licad was soloist in Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto when she was barely 14 and the no-applause-in-between-movement rule simply didn't apply when she performed it abroad.)

Seven-year-old Hugo Kingston Hua (a pupil of Cecile Basilio Roxas) made it to the honorable-mention list, and 9-year-old Marin Suzuki (also a student of Roxas), who played Bach's Invention No. 13 in A Minor, landed first prize in category A1 (ages 10 and below).

Nine-year-old Patrick Allen Sy (pupil of Carmencita Arambulo), who played Invention No. 8 in F Major with astounding



PIANO Teachers Guild of the Philippines

Baroque rhythm, placed second, while 8-year-old Danielle Joy L. See (pupil of Anthony Say), who played Bach's Invention No. 8 in F Major, was equally in synch with the Baroque style.

In the A2 category, 12-year-old Lorenzo Medel (pupil of Mauricia Borromeo) landed first, and his facility was amazing as he played Bach's Sinfonia No. 15 in B Minor. An 11-year-old, Denise Faith See (student of Say), was equally good in the same piece.

Third prizes in this category were claimed by 12-year-old Zheng Yang Tiu (student of George Ong) and 11-year-old James Pierre Silangcruz (student of Erlinda Fule).

Hannah Lyn Tan, 17, a first-prize winner in category B and a student of Mary Anne Espina, rendered a well-defined "Well-Tempered Clavier" Vol. 1, No. 3 in C Major, while 20-year-old Darren Elias Matias (first prize, category C, student of Fule) delivered a dazzling Toccata in G Major. Equally impressive were the WTC Vol. 2, No. 6 in D Minor of Foederis Gumarang (third prize, category B, student of Say) and Clarjane Belliones (third prize and a student of Jo-vianney Emmanuel Cruz).

The rendition of "WTC," Vol. 2, No. 20, in A Minor by Beah Darda Gumarang (second prize, category B, student of Ruby Salvosa) was characterized by rare finesse while Juan Michael Sargado (second prize, category B, student of Lucy Magalit) delivered a well-dispatched Fantasia and Fugue in A Minor. Anne Marie Caldoza (second prize, student of Najib Ismail) also showed unusual clarity in her performance of Bach's "WTC," Vol. 2, No. 15 in G Major.

A total of 74 applicants joined this year's Bach competition sponsored by the Philippine American Life Insurance Company, and 36 made it to the finals. In the preliminaries, the jury heard the contestants behind a curtain so as not to reveal their identities.

"We have to resort to this rule because the music circle is so small and everyone knows everybody," said Father Maramba. "The finalists were chosen not because of who they are and their teachers but how they played behind closed curtains visually separated from the jury."

This year's prizewinners will be heard Oct. 26 in "Paco Park Presents."

The contest was just one of the activities lined up by PTGP to observe its 35th anniversary.

Tito Estrada mural

Tito Estrada's permanent exhibit "Symphony at Sea" was recently unveiled at the SSS Building in Quezon City. It was followed by the opening of his one-man show with Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Julie Defensor, Leslie Albano and Dr. Ed Pobleto as special guests.

Measuring 4 x 8 ft, "Symphony at Sea" is Estrada's donation to the SSS. It was received by SSS administrator Corazon de la Paz.

Cavite arts center

An arts exhibit, "Habagat," initiated by an arts sector called Grupo Ocho recently opened at Alfonso Hotel in Alfonso, Cavite. Proceeds from this exhibit will go to the Chapel on the Hill Choir, one of the projects lined up by Grupo Ocho, which represents young artists in the visual arts, literature and music in Cavite.

The arts renaissance effort is supported by Zenny and Rey Lara, a balikbayan couple from Cavite.

Alfonso Hotel, owned and managed by Pio Fernandez, is being eyed as the new haven for the arts in Cavite. It is within the Royale Tagaytay Estates, a tourist spot just 60 km from Manila. Call (046)4130770.



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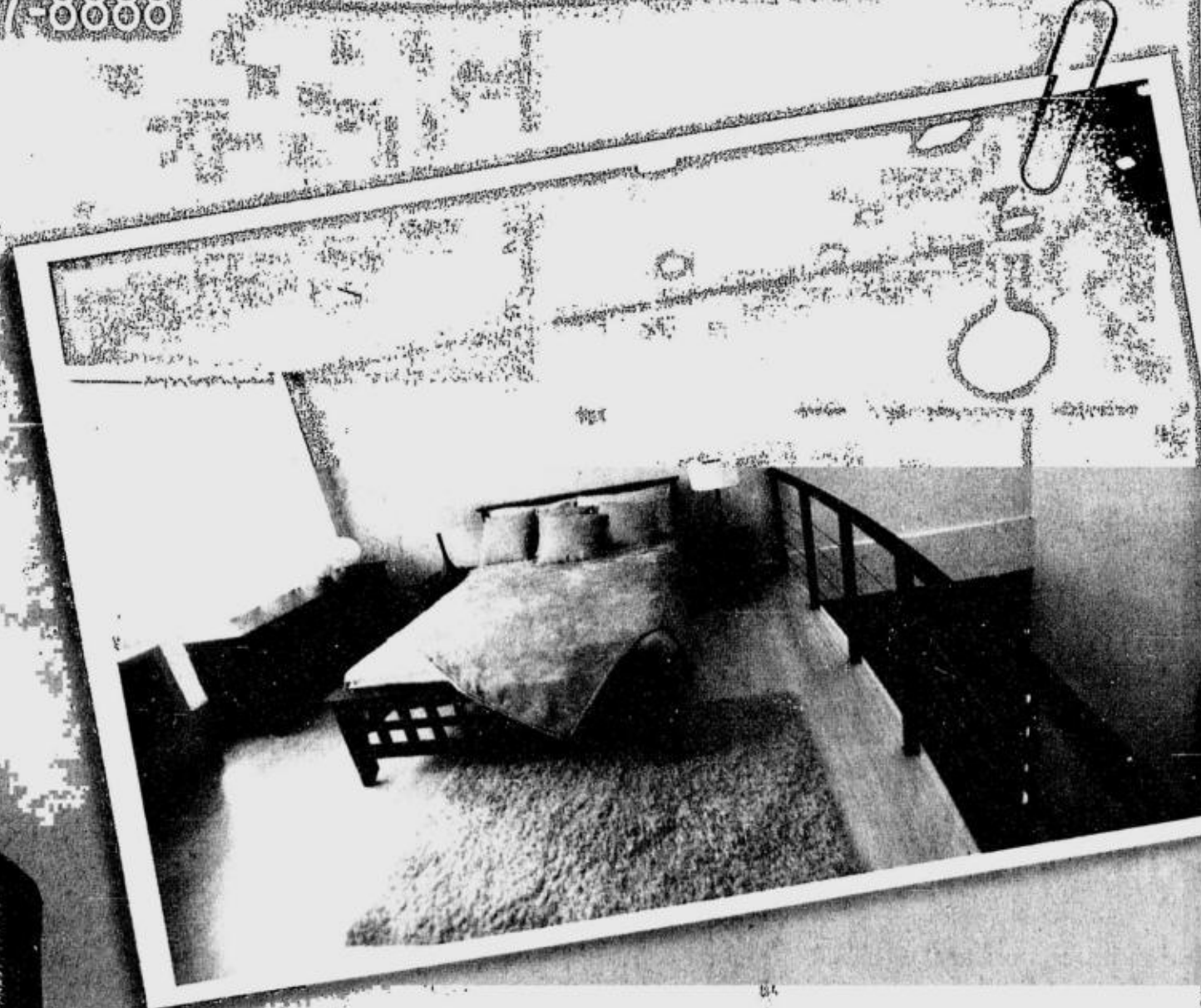
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The sound of Wilwayco

By Lito B. Zulueta

EDWIN Wilwayco's music-inspired abstraction assumes a lively but hardly light-hearted tenor in "Scherzo," a suite of oil works that will be displayed at Serendra in Taguig starting tonight and in Singapore next month.

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Farley Del Rosario's welcome impostors

By Jessica Jalandoni-Robillos
Contributor

IT IS FITTING THAT FARLEY DEL Rosario has chosen to depict his own version of 14th-century Flemish painter Jan Van Eyck's "The Betrothal of the Arnolfini," which has been much studied mathematically for its spatial inaccuracy.

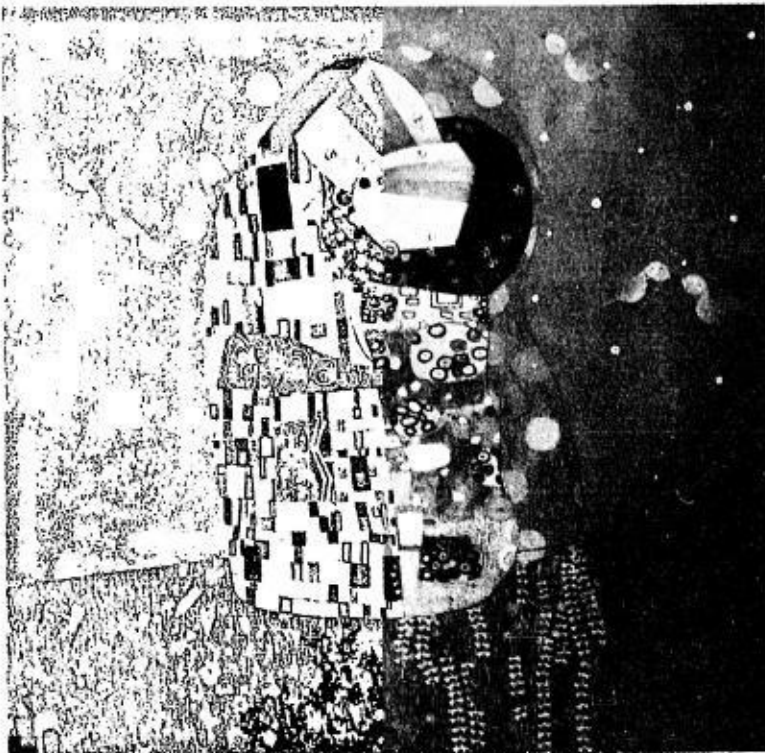
Says art historian Josef Kern, "The figures in Van Eyck's paintings cannot exist in the spaces surrounding them in the normal human way." German writer/artist Anita Albus notes that "Van Eyck's perspective transcends the boundaries of human perception, and thereby necessarily breaches the laws of geometry."

Del Rosario, an admirer of Van Eyck regardless of the problem with orthogonals and vanishing points, has variegated the marriage portrait not only through color but also by presenting his signature subjects (not your usual humans) in place of the original. His brand of perception results in curled lines instead of necks and arms and the oval faces with eyes round and noses lined from the forehead make the depiction quite comical.

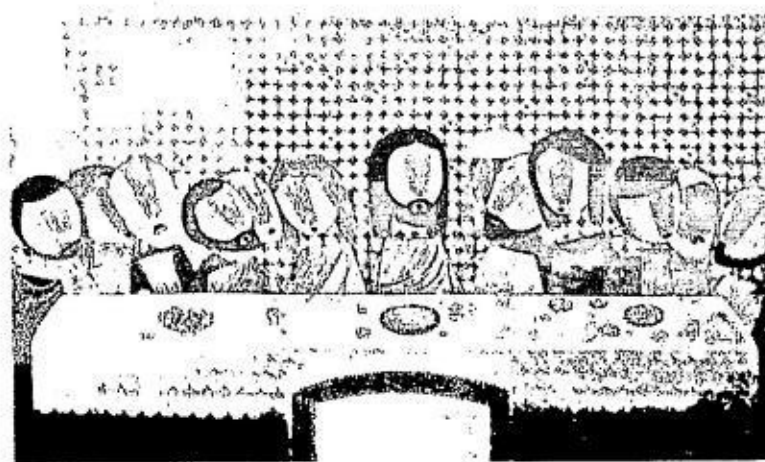
It is precisely this sense of humor that beguiles Farley followers, more so as he has titled the piece "Yan, Van Eyck," punning the artist's name with the Filipino declaration.

It is one among several amusing versions of well-known masterpieces in "Impostor in Poster," on show in Choice Expression Gallery at 2/F Dofia Consolacion Bldg., Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City.

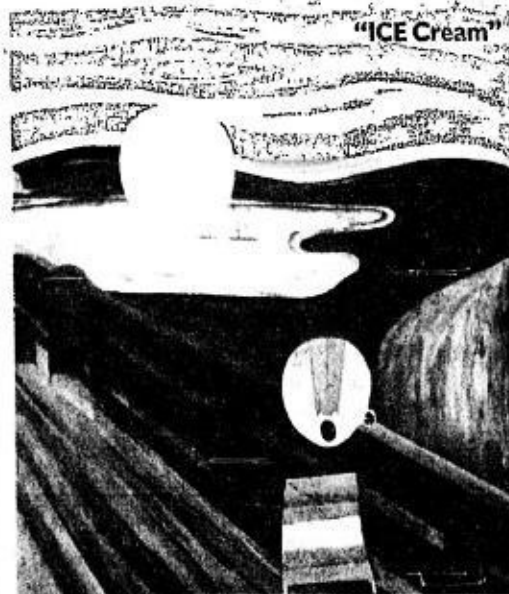
The humorous suite of paintings in no way means to disparage the originals. It is, in fact, Farley's way of showing his admiration and paying his respect in the way he can, incidentally bringing to mind Van Eyck's motto of "Als ich chan," Flemish for "As



"GUSTAV Clings"



"THE LAST Super Hero"



I (best) can."

Del Rosario, who's only 27, also says he depicts his whimsical elements based on what he sees around him.

The titles either pun the original or the master's name. Zandro Boticelli is honored with "Zandra's Boat's a Shellie," where spindly-legged Venus stands on half a clamshell that seems to be floating amid waves.

Da Vinci is revered with "The Last Super Hero," which has a light bright-green background, and "Mona Rocks," where La Gioconda, indeed, rocks on a rocking horse.

Then he shows Klimt's popular couple entwined with "Gustav Clings."

Munch

He makes a narrative for Munch with "Ice Cream," saying that the subject was so excited by the sight of an ice cream cart that in the process of shrieking, he lost the balloon he had in his hand as well.

Again there is the bilingual pun with "Hurry, Dali" (dali being the Tagalog for "hurry"), as if to give a voice to those persistent memories parlayed with melting clocks, mementos and skeletal remains. Some avid admirers say it is the cheek of his works that makes them all the more refreshing.

In the piece where his figures are absent, Farley's one-room houses that resemble bird cages with sticks as legs appear in place of buildings or houses. Some elements are replaced by patterns, objects or animals that have been seen in his previous works and those that he is preparing to exhibit in Singapore in November.

There he reverts back to his scenes of urchins at play in places that bring to mind "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." He displays his own mastery of creating spaces of wonder that only he can see in his fantastic mind.

And because like Van Eyck he "transcends the boundaries of human perception," as he insinuates his own fantasies in images so well-loved that they have been replicated in countless posters, his impostors, it seems, are most welcome.

Call 8990718 for details.

E-mail the author at major-day@gmail.com

25 Pinoy artists join Larasati auction



"BEAUTIES in the Garden," by Lydia Velasco

TWENTY-NINE WORKS FROM 25 Filipino artists have been chosen for inclusion to the auction of Larasati over the weekend at the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Hotel in Singapore.

For Larasati's 10th Pictures of Asia (Modern & Contemporary Art) auction, a total of 172 paintings are included.

Leading the group of artworks chosen from the Philippines is a 36" x 48" piece, "The Performers," by National Artist Arturo Luz. There are also works by Pacita Abad, Aileen Grace Lanuza, Marcel Antonio, Joel Bartolome, Carlo Magno, Charlie Co, Reynold de la Cruz, Manny Garibay, Jasper Penuliar, Joy Mallari, Juanito Torres, Jerry Morada, Marina Cruz, Neil Manalo, Paul Rocero, Rodel Tapaya, Lydia Velasco, Roland Ventura, Rolando Ventura, Vincent de Pio, Bernard Vista and Wawi Navarroza.

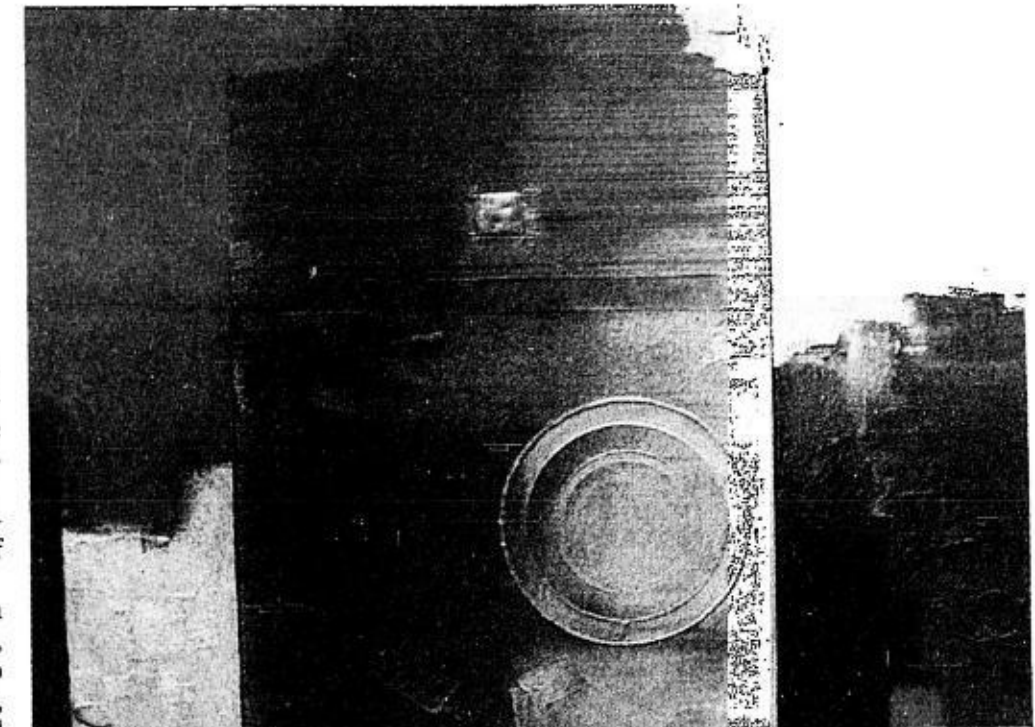
One of the favorites of the auctioneers is Morada, who has three works at the auction—"Tanda ng di Paglimot," "Kalayaan (Freedom)" and "The Secret of the Brown Scapular."

Lydia Velasco has two works up for auction—"Mother's Love" and "Beauties in the Garden." Bernard Vista likewise has two works. One of the largest works is by Sandra Fabie Gfeller, "Summer," which is 120 x 243 cm in dimension.

Also featured in the auction are important pieces by old masters such as Affandi, Hencira Gunawan and Sudjana Kerton of Indonesia; Le Pho of Vietnam, and Wu Guan Zhong of China, as well as works by Indo-European Masters such as La Mayeur of Belgium and Rudolph Bonnet of the Netherlands.

There will also be a strong section from Southeast Asian New Contemporary Artists from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Korea.

Visit www.larasati.com or call (65) 67372130.

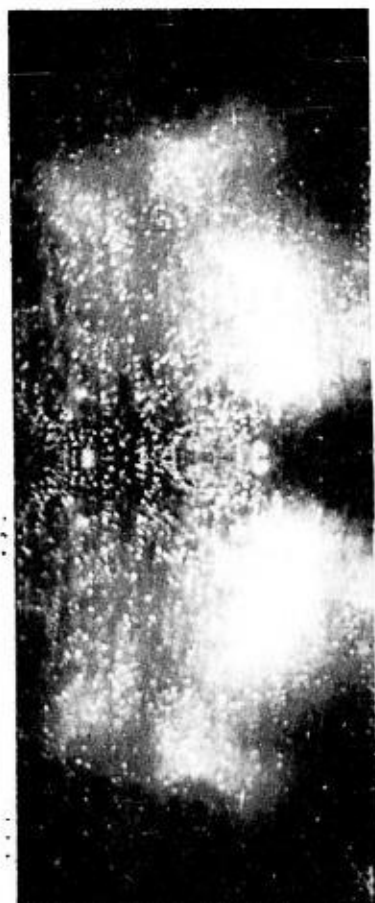


"SUMMER Solstice" and "Vision Magnified" (below)

Carlo Magno's art in 'Continuum'

ABSTRACT ARTIST CARLO Magno's new show "Continuum" is running at Galerie Raphael (Unit 2C-06 2/L, The Piazza, Serendra Mall, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, tel. 8563034), on Oct. 17. The exhibit features 30 new works by Magno.

Aside from the latest developments in his art, Magno will be introducing his abstract works on diptychs, triptychs and works on paper.



"MORNING Is Coming," by Jasper Penuliar;
"The Soloist," by Aileen Grace Lanuza; "Farewell Father," by Rodel Tapaya



Thrill to "The Brotherhood of the Holy Shroud"

POLITICAL ANALYST AND NEWS COR-respondent Julia Navarro makes her debut in the literary scene with the action-packed bestseller "The Brotherhood of the Holy Shroud." Following the success of the religious suspense genre spawned by "The Da Vinci Code," the novel centers on chief investigator Marconi Valoni as he races with time to solve a theft that's about to shock the world.

When a plot to steal the Holy Shroud of Turin publicly unravels, Marconi and his team of art crime investigators find themselves privy to an age-old secret conspiracy tightly kept within the highest councils of the Vatican and the boardrooms of the rich and powerful. Their thrilling hunt for clues takes them on an adventure across the globe, teeming with intrigue, clandestine societies and shadowy legends of the

Knights Templar.

This gripping tale of one religion's controversial relic captivates readers with an interesting mix of fact and fiction seamlessly integrated into the plotline. Spanning centuries and continents, Navarro's first thriller proves to be more than just a knock-off of the other historical suspense novels.



PowerBooks Specialty Store is a complete one-stop bookstore with branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428-29), Megamall (6352898-99), Alabang Town Center (8505662-63), Glorietta 3 (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25), Robinson's Place Ermita (5233334/5243448), Mall of Asia (5560244), Festival Supermall (8508221), and Trinoma (9431581-82).

VISUAL ARTS



Ortiz at West Gallery

Renan Ortiz presents "Sandosenang Sarap, or the Lies and Farce of Ifilgo Ramus and the Rivet Thieves," until Nov. 3 in West Gallery (Mary Santos Arcade, 48 West Ave., QC). Ortiz depicts dystopia through a variety of multimedia forms, including video, sculpture, neon signs, tarpaulin and mirror images. He tackles globalization, the effect of advertising, propaganda and pop-culture icons. Call 4119221/0336.

Cainglet at Le Soufflé

Henri Cainglet's latest works will be on view at Le Soufflé Restaurant (34/F, Citibank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City), Nov. 5-30. "A Portrait and a Dream" takes inspiration from the artist's dreams, his perceptions of being an art innovator and a dream-weaver. His new canvases feature images that combine abstraction and representation. Call 7505810 to 11 or 0918-3947671.



Samsons at Kaida

Jerson, Julio and Jaypee Samson will mount an exhibit, "The Samsons," Oct. 28-Nov. 12, in Kaida Gallery, 2/F, GFO Bldg., 122 Kamuning Road, QC. Jerson chooses to represent stories from the margins of society. In his paintings depicting contemporary personalities as half-human and half-animal, Julio delivers a scathing critique of societal ills and excesses. Jaypee exhibits a series of works articulating the woes of the Philippine public education system. Call 4144777, 0928-5057285.



"DISCIPLINA," by Jaypee Samson

Ocampo at Art Informal

Art Informal presents Aleth Ocampo's "Handumanan," Visayan for *pamana* or "legacy," which runs until Nov. 6 at Art Informal, 277 Connecticut St., Greenhills East, Mandaluyong City (tel. 7258518). Ocampo pays tribute to her mother with a series of still lifes and portraits of mother and daughter, in pure colors and vibrant textures.



"WATER"

Art workshop

The Art Discovery and Learning Foundation, Inc., the Rotary Club of Makati and Eastwood City present a free art workshop for art teachers (public and private schools), Nov. 18 and 25, 2:30-5:30 p.m., and on-the-spot-painting contest, Dec. 16, 8 a.m.-12 noon, at the Central Plaza, Citywalk Two, Eastwood City, Libis, QC. Call 3762196 for details.



"ANG Batang Nag-aalaga ng Bibe," oil on canvas by Benny Buendia, is part of the "Rural Scenes" exhibit in Galeria de las Islas (3/F, Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila), until Oct. 30. The exhibit features 20 of Buendia's finest countryside stereoviews. Call 5272113.



TAM P. Austria, artist, author and philosopher, pays tribute to Cebuano artists in a recent talk with students and faculty of the Fine Arts department of University of San Carlos in Cebu City. In photo, he receives a certificate of appreciation. With him are his wife Divine and faculty members: Gabriel Abellana, Jose Kimsoy Yap, Brenda Seno, George Lao, and Jojo Sagaymo; with Celso Pepito of Cebu Artists Inc.

In many of the pieces, one sees a smooth blending of distinctive styles



"GEORGE Harrison," with Benjie Cabrera



"ANTHONY Kiedis," with Butch Payawal



"MADONNA," with Lydia Velasco

José Ibay with a little help from his friends

By Constantino C. Tejero

A COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER first, José Ibay seriously turned into painting only in the last few years. Though consistently awarded for his advertising photography in the Philippine Advertising Congress and the Creative Guild of the Philippines since the mid-1980s, he has put up just three solo painting exhibits, now that he's turning 60.

Ibay started with expressionist portraits characterized by vigorous brushstroke, rough texture and bold colorism. In his exhibit last year, he ventured into the monochrome, the wash, the pastel hue. It's clear he has been making up for lost time in terms of technical experimentation.

His latest phase can be seen in "Rocked Age: Images of Loud Music Culture," 40 pieces in oil, acrylic, pen and ink, oil stick and mixed media on canvas, until Oct. 26 in the Upper Galleries of Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Central Bank of the Philippines Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. It is presented in cooperation with Galerie Astra.

These are 40 interaction paintings with 36 artist friends. The portraits are of rock musicians based on found images, photographs most of which are now iconic.

Distinctive styles

The rendering of the central image on the canvas is recognizably by Ibay. What his friends have done is primarily retouching, either to modify, intensify or highlight the image.

Two of the portraits, in acrylic and oil stick on canvas, are done by Ibay alone: one of John Lennon, the biggest piece in the exhibit; and another of Bruce Springsteen, set on an easel of steel and metal sheet fashioned by Pete Jimenez.

In some pieces, his friends' collaboration consists mainly of marginal details or background painting, such as Monn Cañeza's work on Kurt Cobain; Egai Fernandez's on



"JOHN Lennon," by Ibay and Fildelacruz

Paul McCartney; Justin Nuyda's on Pete Townsend; José Tence Ruiz's on Bono; Jethro Jolson's on David Bowie; Raul Isidro's on Bowie; Rafael Cusi's on Freddie Aguilar.

In other pieces, his collaborators equally share the canvas with him—and each style being distinctive, the viewer sees a dual personality in a piece. Such is the case of his work with Roger San Miguel on the portrait of Sampaguita; Sonny Yñiguez on Johnny Cash; Edeguz on Ramon Jacinto; Fildelacruz on Lennon; Pandy Aviado on Buddy Holly.

Seamless mingling

In a few pieces, Ibay seems overwhelmed by the styles and techniques of his collaborators so that his artistic presence on the canvas becomes subsumed to theirs, such as his work with Junyee on Neil Young; Bobby Nuestro on Morrissey; Rico Lascano on Bob Marley.

Here his broad brushstroke and expressive use of color have turned into line drawing, pallor and wash. (Or maybe this is just an extension of last year's tonal experimentation?)

In many of the pieces, though, the viewer sees a seamless mingling of two styles: Ibay's work with Dante Perez on Iggy Pop; Hermisanto on Jimi Hendrix; Benjie Cabangis on Jim Morrison; Cid Reyes on Rod Stewart; Fred Ramirez on James Taylor; Edwin Wilwayco on Elvis Presley; Butch Payawal on Anthony Kiedis; Prudencio



"KURT Cobain," with Monn Cañeza



"JIM Morrison," with Benjie Cabangis

Lamarroza on Frank Zappa; Romeo Lee on Bob Dylan; Manny Baldemor on Jerry Lee Lewis; Benjie Cabrera on George Harrison; Antipas Delotavo on Mike Hanopol; Carlos Filart on Ringo Starr; Phyllis Zaballero on Elvis; Alwin Reamillo on Cat Stevens.

In such pieces, one can see where Ibay ends and his collaborator begins, but the line is so thin it's almost imperceptible. And there is one where it's almost impossible to tell which is which—the portrait of Madonna he has done with Lydia Velasco. Here is a marriage of styles that's perfect, the visual union complete.

It is clear that, though a late bloomer in painting, Ibay has turned masterly.



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The sound . . .

From page D1

After last year's "Silent Music" and "Homage to Vivaldi," both shows inspired by the music of the Venetian musician of the late Renaissance, it is perhaps expected of Wilwayco to expand his musical taste as to take on other composers as well. In the new show therefore are works inspired by musical movements from concertos by such renowned composers as Chopin, Schubert, Haydn, Dvorak, Mendelssohn and Stravinsky.

The focus of the show is on the scherzo, which is the third (or sometimes second) movement in a symphony or string quartet. The word is derived etymologically from the Italian and means literally jest or joke. Wilwayco's art of course is hardly jocular and his sensibility does not usually take to ribaldry or even mild humor. Therefore, the "Scherzo" here recreates the movement which is basically the liveliest of three movements, demonstrating an abounding vitality.



"SCHERZO XVII (Schubert)"; at right, "Scherzo VI (Chopin)"



"SCHERZO XIX (Stravinsky's Scherzo à la Russe)"



"SCHERZO XXI (Brahms)"

Wilwayco approximates all of this critical, imperative spirit through lines, colors, and, as Alice Guillermo in her notes to the Singapore exhibit shows, in the sizes of the canvases. Generally, Wilwayco works in three canvases—a square canvas (48x48), a long horizontal format and a vertical format.

Depending on the formats, Wilwayco employs a color scheme that goes from warm to heartfelt (the contiguous colors of red, orange and yellow) in the case of the square and vertical works, and that goes from passionate to severe (the deep colors of blue and violet) in the case of the horizontal works.

The strokes in the square and vertical works show a density as far as the application of pigments and their overlaying are concerned. The materiality of the hues runs counter to the purity of the music that Wilwayco and abstractionists like him try to approximate; however daunting the challenge, the artist is able to marry the ineffable and the material. He achieves the feat by his bold strokes that leave marks—scratches, impastos, and even gratings—of their movements, like hastily written musical notes by a composer running after his inspiration: "Chopin" is volatile and fiery, "Mendelssohn" is just as passionate but with a hint of the ceremonial, like the composer's famous wedding march, and "Schubert" is wildly melodic bordering on the undisciplined (as the composer's music is sometimes unjustly tagged by critics), the colors here erupting to a bacchanalia.

Narratives in color

The horizontal works, by virtue of their linear trajectory, appears to be narratives in colors and strokes. Here again, Wilwayco seems to be pitting his trademark abstraction against the impurity of narrative, the lines and hues like a plotline that however assumes an asymmetry, the sequences all jigsawed to an indeterminate but highly dramatic mesh.

Thus, "Stravinsky" is like a jaunty celebratory dance, like the Russian composer's "Rite of Spring," and "Brahms" is taut and deeply felt, like the composer's "German Requiem," a feast of faith and affirmation.

Guillermo and Cid Reyes (who also writes his notes on the Singapore show) say that the new music-driven suite of works advances Wilwayco's experimentation with the psychological trigger of music, as explained by Kandinsky: "The vibrations of the air (sound) and of light (color) surely form the foundation of physical affinity . . . But it is not the only foundation. There is yet another: the psychological foundation."

But perhaps it is not so much psychology as synaesthesia: the interaction and communion of the senses despite the primacy accorded to one over another depending on the art: aural in the case of music, visual in the case of painting.

If reading, words and narrative "Balkanize" the senses, an abstract triggered by music seeks to renew and reunite the senses. It is the achievement of Wilwayco's recent works that he has been able to probe the divided sensibility that owes to the dissociation of and among the senses engendered by the artifice of modernity.

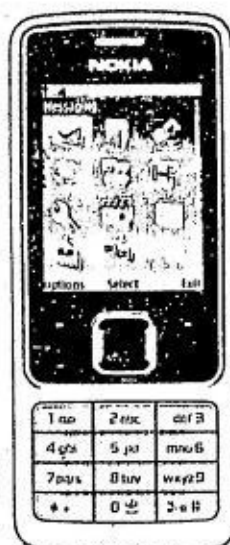
If Pater is correct in saying that all art aspires to the condition of music, then there should be some credence given to Wilwayco's current music-spirited art: the coming together of the senses that should result in the communion of the spirit.

"Scherzo" by Edwin Wilwayco opens tonight at 1/of Gallery, Unit C-229, 2/L, Shops at Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig; tel. 9013152; www.canvas.ph; and Nov. 2 at Momentous Arts, 20 Lor Telok, off Boat Quay, Singapore; tel. 65353961; e-mail mmtous@singnet.com.sg; www.momentousarts.com.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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Vote for the new Rivermaya member

CHEER FACTOR

THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW Rivermaya vocalist ends Oct. 24 in a finals night at the Music Museum. Fans may vote through SMS for their choice from the remaining two final-

ists. Text VOTE (SPACE) FINALIST CODE NUMBER and send to 2910. The finals night will be broadcast on Studio 23, 9:15 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 28.

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PAOLO Bediones and girlfriend Abigail Cruz

Ciara's new love in Vegas

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Anne Carvajal

HERE'S AN E-mail from Ciara Sotto about her newfound love in Vegas. Looks like her heart is on a winning streak over there; she need not gamble at all with her emotions:

Hi, Dolly! Those pics of me and my BF that came out in your column were taken during my birthday at Mt. Charleston, Nevada. His gift for me was a ticket to the concert of my favorite, Gwen Stefani, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. I really had a blast—one of the most blissful days of my life. It's such a blessing to have a wonderful man who makes you appreciate the simple things in life. I've never been this happy. He's a very simple guy, self-made, hardworking. And I'm the proudest girlfriend ... Ciara

Second to none

Abigail Cruz told me without hesitation that she's willing to marry Paolo Bediones when the time is right.

"Unlike other guys I've met, Pao can really make me laugh even when I'm not in the mood to. He finds time to spend with me and my family. Aside from the knee high boots he gave me, his time is the best gift," she said with a twinkle in her eye.

Is there anything she wants to change in Pao? "His dancing. It's so '80s!"

All the rest in Pao is "Abby inspired." The Bb. Pilipinas 2nd runner-up comes second to none in his heart.

Wacky quadruplets

Kudos to Viva Films for the rousing success of "Apat Dapat, Dapat Apat." The comedy film raked in P9 million during the first week of its run.

Lead stars Ruffa Mae Quinto, Candy Pangilinan, Eugene Domingo and Pokwang ought to be called Viva Funny Babes. Move over, Viva Hot Babes!

No trophy girl

Cristine Reyes would rather let love wait. "I always end up getting hurt," she said. "I want a serious relationship. Pero 'yung mga nagpaparamdam ngayon eh parang gusto lang akong i-display." She's not one to settle for being just a trophy

CIARA'S/E2

True colors shine through

DON'T BE afraid to let them show—your true colors are beautiful like the rainbow," Tessa Prieto Valdes sang on the night she took the crown.

Valdes won the first Philippine edition of "Celebrity Duets," a Fremantle franchise, on GMA 7 Saturday night.

Her competition: Dr. Hayden Kho Jr. and Jessica Rodriguez-Bunavacz (below).

Valdes' finals night numbers summed up her performance during the 13-week tilt: "True Colors" by Cyndi Lauper (sung with Joey Generoso) and "I'm Walking on Sunshine," by Katrina and the Waves (with Kyla, top right).

The judges agreed that Valdes, voted by viewers nationwide via SMS, had won on the very strength of her weaknesses.

She had picked songs that downplayed her limitations, they said, and highlighted her edge: a keen sense of fun.

Week after week, she "walked on sunshine," in extravagant costumes, though the voice faltered intermittently.

"Did I win? Did I win?" Valdes kept asking even while she already held a huge spring bouquet that was the answer.

The best part is, she's donating all of the P1 million cash prize to 10 charities.

As The Waves exclaimed, "And don't it feel good!"



AUGUST DELA CRUZ



Svenson saved my hair from thinning!

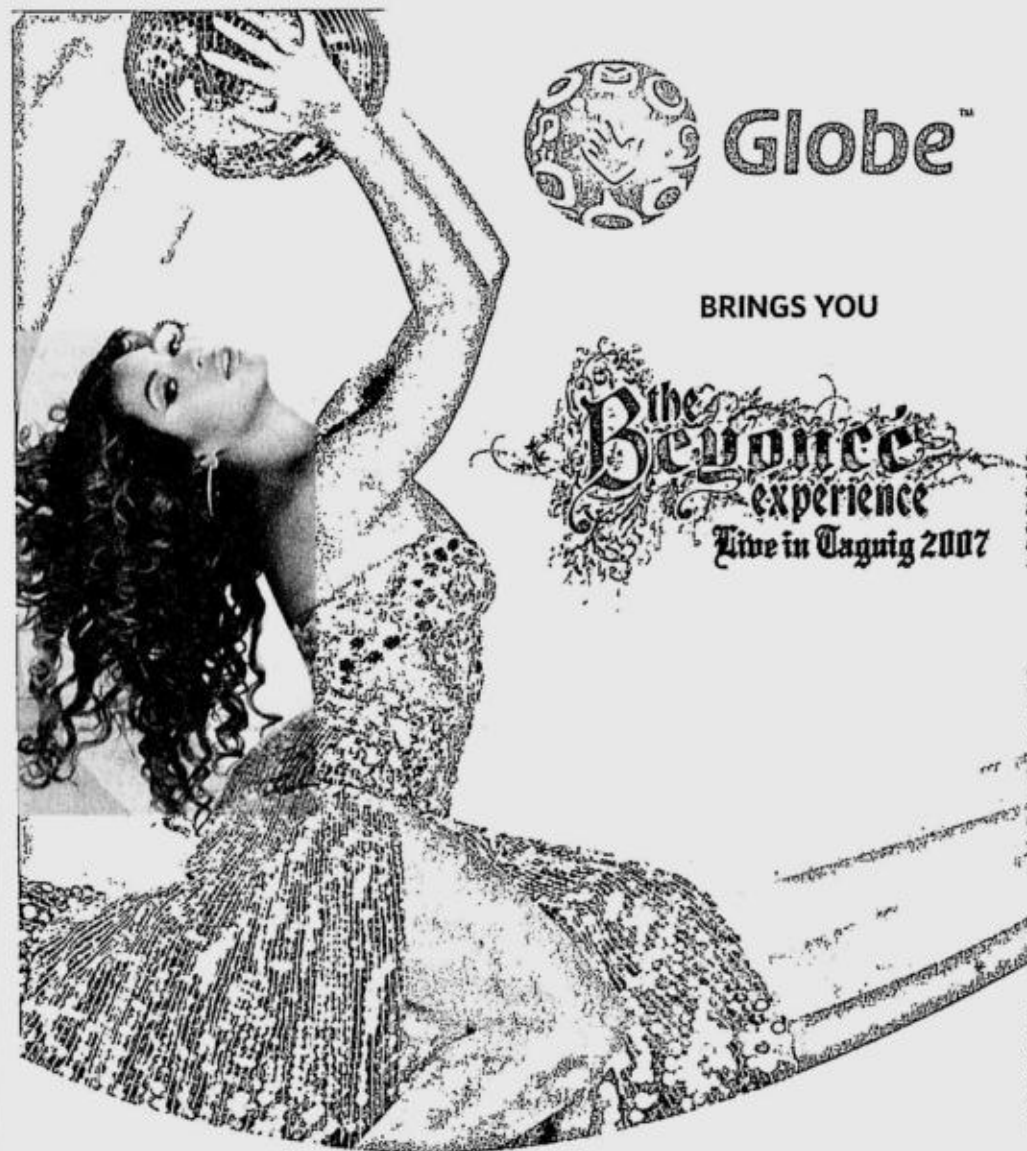
- Eva Abesamis Designer

Eva Abesamis has been known for having gorgeous, thick, lush locks. But it wasn't always this way. "There was a time when I dyed my hair and put some highlights," Eva recalls. "Then my hair started to fall. I felt very desperate! A friend of mine recommended Svenson. After the treatments, I was totally, absolutely satisfied with the results! My hair became nice and thick and lush again! Friends started to notice the difference. Even strangers would come up to me and give me compliments! I'd tell all the women out there not to be embarrassed by thinning hair. If you see early signs of losing it you should address it immediately. 'Cause that's your crowning glory! And you shouldn't go anywhere else but Svenson!"

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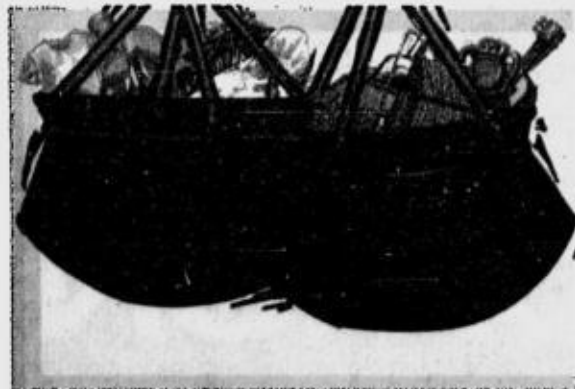
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2: ROGUE ASSASSIN
3: WEDDING DAZE
4: I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
5: DAYWATCH
6: RESERVED
7: RESERVED
8: APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

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1: STARDUST
2: SKINWALKERS
3: THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
4: NO RESERVATIONS
5: I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
6: NO RESERVATIONS
7: APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
8: RESIDENT EVIL 3
9: RESIDENT EVIL 3
10: RESIDENT EVIL 3
11: STARDUST
12: NO RESERVATIONS
13: APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

girlfriend. Showoffs are tumofis!

Pacwoman
During the second anniversary bash of the tabloid Hataw, Ara Mina said in jest before her number, "You may request any song except 'Lupang Hinirang.' Pacquiao's song is no longer called 'Para Sa 'Yo' but 'Ara Sa 'Yo.' I am now known as Pacwoman."
Even if she was being funny, it was obvious that the intrigues have knocked her spirits out.
Speaking of Pacman, I spotted a huge billboard of his wife Jinkee in Bacolod. She's the endorser for a baby clothing line. Will Jinkee have billboards in Manila, too, and give Ara a run for her Manny, este, money?

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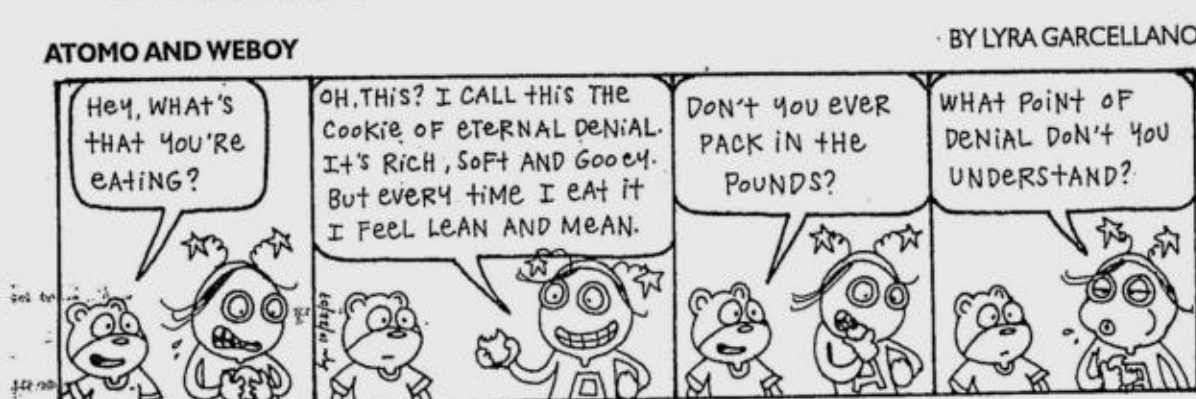
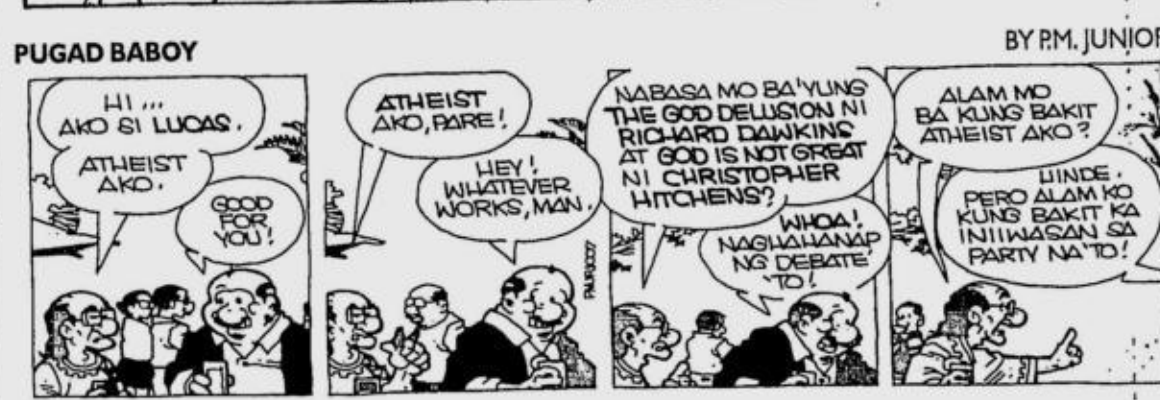
OPENS OCTOBER 24 **VIVA**

OPENS OCTOBER 24
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SOMEONE YOU LOVE JUST DISAPPEARED.
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A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS To have and to hold Art: ARNELA A. AVETRIA



DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Tall motion

4 Get undressed

9 Leopard markings

14 Latin eggs

15 Savory smell

16 Some stretches

17 Wimbledon call

18 Involving warships

19 Middle East gulf

20 Queen member

23 Fruity coat

24 One of the Clantons

25 Islands off Portugal

28 Infirmary count

30 Soak up rays

33 Correct software

34 "Censor" of Rome

35 After-shower wear

36 Nash/Weill musical

39 Luxurious

40 Quick look

41 That is to (say): Lat.

42 Mao ___ Tung

43 Long, for short

44 Ones in charge

45 Make a sharp turn

46 Elizabeth or Bob

47 Epcot attraction

54 Valentino role

55 Polished off

56 Bedazzle

57 Braves catcher of the '60s

58 Montezuma, e.g.

59 Peanut butter brand

60 Jail

61 One lacking foresight?

62 Miniature colonist

DOWN

1 Nicholson film

2 State positively

3 Entranceway

4 California port

5 Shows the ropes

6 Wandered

7 Mosque V.I.P.

8 Blanch

9 Casual pants

10 Huff

11 Mr. Sharif

12 Man-shaped drinking mug

13 Fed. retirement org.

21 Sexpert

22 Westheimer

22 Free from

25 Vote to accept

26 ___ paradox

27 Tubby plus

28 Babist faith

29 Orwell's alma mater

30 Shades of color

31 Treat roughly

32 Sits on eggs

34 LXXII x V

35 Biblical body of water

37 Wordsmith's concern

38 Tuggery

43 Teammate of Yogi

44 Ineffectual shepherdess

45 African republic

46 Same herel

47 Buzz off!

48 Fringe benefit

49 Sewing line

50 Indistinct

51 Important Indian

52 Castor, to Pollux

53 Bulk

54 Potent hallucinogen

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have excellent social skills. You practically can magnetize others to you with your charm. You're aware of your image and how you look. Your private life is dramatic because, despite your sophisticated exterior, you are a passionate, rebellious person! In the year ahead, a major change could take place, perhaps something as significant as around 1998.

Birthdate of: Jeff Goldblum, actor; Catherine Deneuve, actress; Sarah Bernhardt, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): For the next few weeks, shared property and insurance matters are of primary interest to you. This is an opportunity for you to clean up some old business.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Ex-partners are definitely back on the scene. Look good! Living well is the best revenge. It could be an opportunity to settle unfinished business.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Despite the delays and silly errors that continue at work, you're galvanized into action now because you want to get better organized. Give yourself the right tools to do a good job.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The next few weeks the perfect time for vacations, playful times, social occasions, love affairs, romance, sports and activities with children. You want to have fun!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Home, family and real estate matters are your primary focus for the month ahead. Discussions with family, especially a parent, could be significant.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Fasten your seat belt! You've got places to go, things to do and people to see. You're entering a busy phase of your life. Plan on taking short trips, running many errands and talking to siblings.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You've been thinking a lot about your values lately. This could be because old money issues or the opportunity to make a major purchase have arisen again in your life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): For the next four weeks, the Sun will be in your sign. Happy birthday! This is your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. It's all about you now.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's time to lie low and work behind the scenes. You need time to contemplate what your New Year should be, because your birthday is looming!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your popularity rating definitely is going to increase. Everyone wants to see your face. Accept all invitations. Enjoy schmoozing with others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): The Sun is high in your chart now, acting like a spotlight on you. Because of this, others notice you—especially bosses and VIPs. Furthermore, they think you're great!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Try to do something different. The next few weeks are an excellent time to sign up for a course or travel somewhere. You're eager for adventure and the opportunity to learn something new.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	9	8	2	6	5	3	1	7
1	7	6	9	3	8	2	4	5
3	5	2	1	7	4	9	8	6
6	8	3	5	9	7	4	2	1
5	1	9	4	8	2	6	7	3
2	4	7	3	1	6	8	5	9
9	3	4	7	2	1	5	6	8
8	2	1	6	5	9	7	3	4
7	6	5	8	4	3	1	9	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Just couldn't have enough of Groban

The star performer's gala concert had all the elements of musical theater

By Pocholo Concepcion

IT WAS APPARENT THAT EVERYONE—from Imelda Marcos and Cory Aquino to Rufa Mae Quintos and Erik Santos to non-celeb fans—had a good time. Josh Groban's gala concert on Wednesday in the packed PICC Plenary Hall had elements of musical theater. There was drama as soon as a mesh-like curtain lifted, plus lots of animated movement.

Groban himself was all over the stage, darting from one end to the other. On the eighth song, he went straight for the crowd, pressing flesh and acting goofy as women screamed and posed with him for snapshots.

It could've been thoroughly pop, except that the star performer had solid training in classical music and was perceived to be veering in that direction when his debut album was released in 2001.

After numerous collaborations with artists from different genres, Groban refused to be

stereotyped or even be called an opera singer.

But on Wednesday, he did exhibit dramatic flair, especially in his signature songs ("You Raise Me Up," "To Where You Are," "The Prayer"), although he had difficulty sustaining some high notes after a while.

Then again, he may be doing it like any pop singer would—wincing when the lyrics turned sad or cutting off a climactic phrase to illustrate desperation.

On the other hand, the eclectic nature of the repertoire—sung in French, Italian, Spanish and English—presented new possibilities through which contemporary music could be appreciated in a deeper, illuminating manner.

At 26, Groban is a big karaoke fan, demonstrating it by singing a few bars of Bon Jovi ("Wanted Dead or Alive"), Elton John ("Tiny Dancer") and Rihanna ("Umbrella"), accompanying himself on the piano.

Thus, his Manila audience couldn't have enough of him. He made several encores—and vowed to be back.

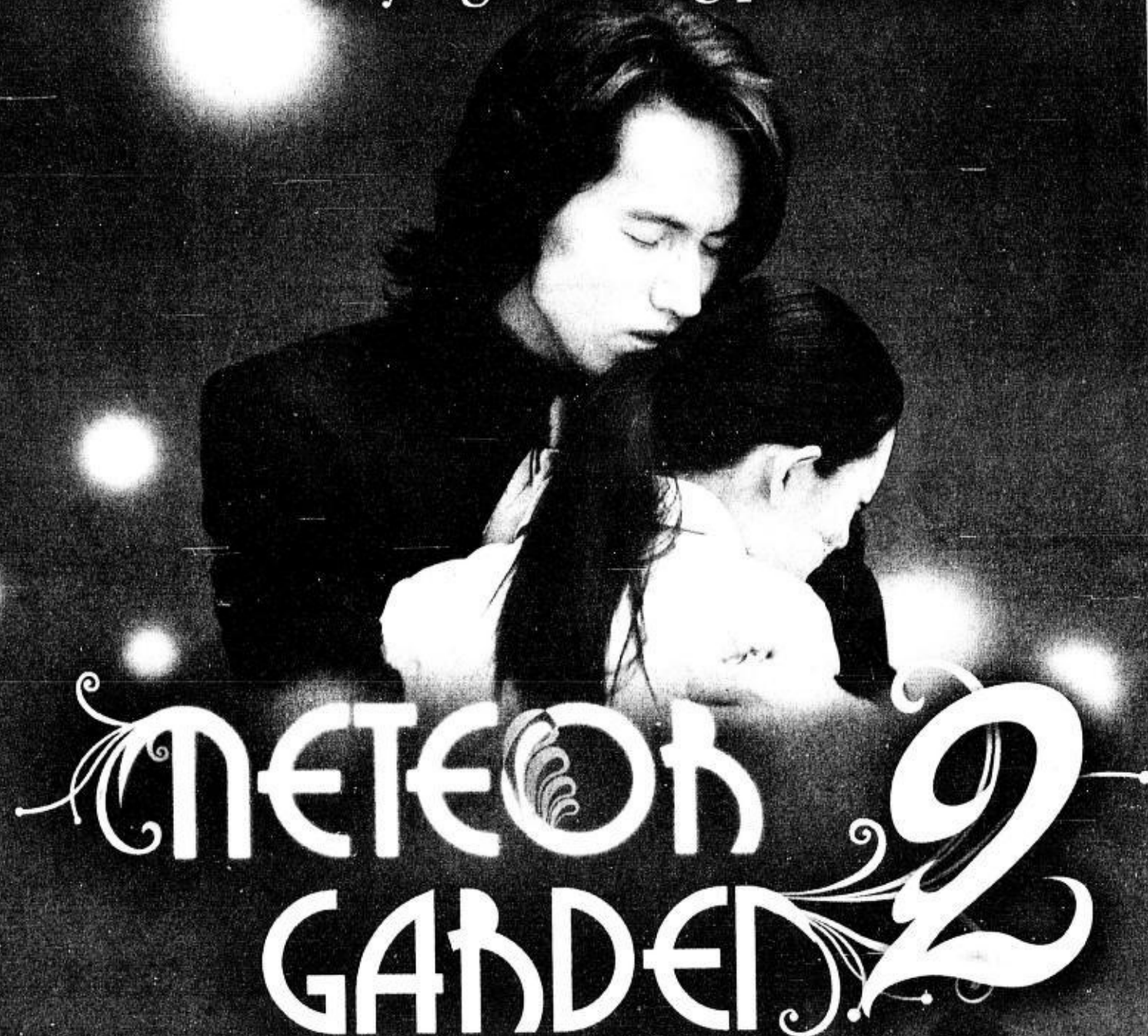


JOSH Groban wooed his PICC audience well; they wouldn't let him go till he made a vow.

NGAYONG HAPON NA!

May mga alaalang iingatan.

May mga alaalang pakakawalan.



MTRCB G GENERAL PATRONAGE ALL AGES ADMITTED

**DAPAT MAG-ENJOY.
DAPAT KALIMUTAN ANG PROBLEMA.
DAPAT MONG PANOORIN.
KAHIT APAT NA BESES AY SULIT PA RIN!**

Rufa Mae Quinto
Eugene Domingo
Pekwang
Gandy Pangilinan

Apat Dapat
MAG-ENJOY
KALIMUTAN ANG PROBLEMA
DAPAT MONG PANOORIN
KAHIT APAT NA BESES AY SULIT PA RIN!

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AND DEATH

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Directed by WENS V. DERAMAS

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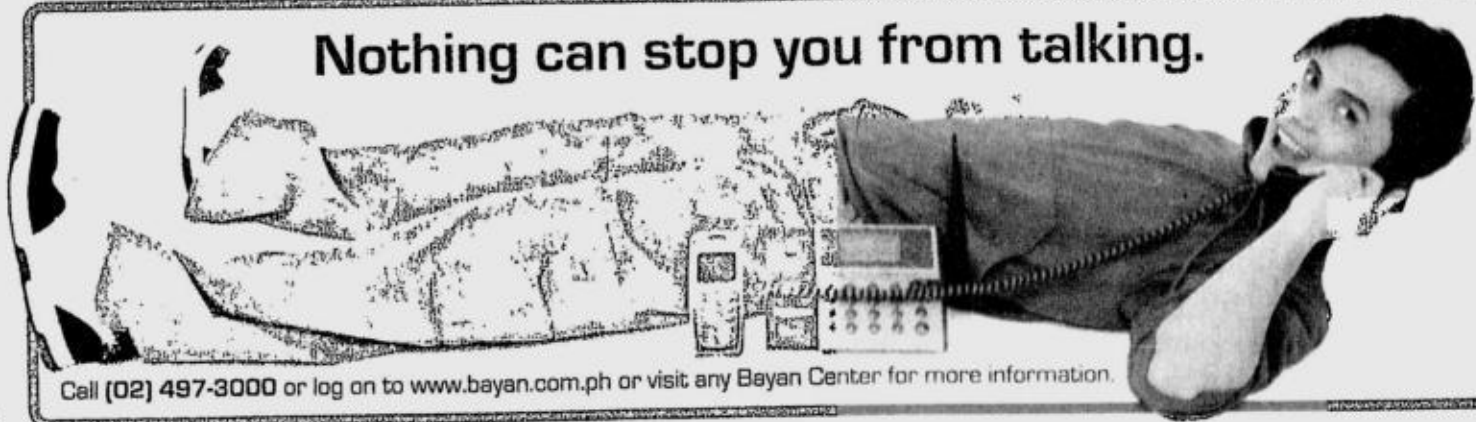
DID YOU KNOW...

Kurt Cobain biopic

LOS ANGELES—A MOVIE BASED on the life of tragic Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain is being planned by Universal Studios. Daily Vari-

ety reported that the studio had acquired the rights to a biography of Cobain, who committed suicide in 1994 at age 27. His widow, Courtney Love, will serve as an executive producer. **AFP**

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If it's Monday, it's time for 'Big Love'

By Marinel R. Cruz

IT'S A VERY DIFFERENT SET-UP. It's up to you to decide whether it's for you or not.

HBO public relations manager Karen Lai was referring to the life of Bill Henrickson, a Mormon and a polygamist—with three wives and seven children—in the new series "Big Love" on HBO.

The series tells of Bill's life (portrayed by Bill Paxton)—his myriad of challenges in balancing the emotional, romantic and financial needs of his wives Barb (Jeanne Tripplehorn), Nicki (Chloe Sevigny) and Margene (Ginnifer Goodwin), while dealing with their kids, his business and an ever-mounting avalanche of bills.

"The focus of the show isn't the fact that he is polygamous, but his relationship with his wives, and the wives' relationship with each other," Karen explained. "Believe it or not, these women—while they get jealous of each other sometimes—get along very well. They actually help each other out."

"Big Love" premieres on HBO on Oct. 22 at 11 p.m.

Karen, along with HBO senior director for Marketing Communications Caroline Wang, sat down with a group of entertainment writ-



AMANDA Seyfried (center) and Joleen Wejbe play Bill Paxton's daughters in HBO's newest series.

ers last week and talked about how HBO is beefing up its programming for the coming months.

Will there be a big public relations blitz for "Big Love" just like in "Entourage"?

What we're trying to do right now is create appointment-viewing so that viewers would know that when it's 11 p.m. every Monday, they should tune in. Aside from HBO Original, we also have a channel called HBO Signature in the Philippines. This is for people who want to watch the entire season of "Big Love" or any HBO Original all in one week. We air three episodes back-to-back. We want to give our viewers as many options as possible.

There's a gap in the airing of "Big Love." Why is it that the last three remaining episodes will be aired in January?

Caroline: "Big Love" is going on vacation in December.

Karen: We have lined up some special programs for the two weeks that we are to celebrate Christmas and New Year. One of these shows is "Mission Impossible 3". There are also other shows premiering in December. On HBO Signature we have "Munich"; on HBO Family, "Wallace and Gromit"; and on HBO Hit, it's "Over the Hedge".

CLICK!

The lead character is a Mormon with three wives and seven kids

Caroline: On the 24th at 11 p.m., we'll be airing the "Nativity Story." On New Year's Eve, we'll show "Mission Impossible 3" at 9 p.m., and the show called "Beerfest" at 11 p.m.

Hallmark and Star Movies are also beefing up for the holidays, and are planning to come up with more programs next year. How does the competition between these two networks affect HBO?

We can only talk about our services. What we do is constantly ensure that our programming delivers in terms of quality. Actually, our shows for next year are—from our point of view—just as good.

When one particular series ends in the US, how many months does it take for the show to come out in DVD format?

The DVD usually comes out before the new season premieres. We premiere programs in Asia before the DVD comes out in the US.

From 'Six Feet Under'

WHETHER IT'S ON SCREEN or off, Rachel Griffiths knows how to create a scene.

On TV, the Australian actress is best known for her turn as Brenda Chenoweth in the dark drama, "Six Feet Under." Away from the cameras, the 38-year-old sparked a storm of controversy when she protested the opening of a casino in her hometown of Melbourne by showing up topless to the first-night celebrations. Yes, the woman knows how to make her presence felt.

The actress was first catapulted to fame with her supporting role in the 1994 comedy "Muriel's Wedding." She followed this up with supporting turns in "My Best Friend's Wedding" and "Jude," as well as an Oscar-nominated role in the 1998 biopic "Hilary and Jackie."

In 2001, she signed on to star in the groundbreaking TV series "Six Feet Under."

"Family drama used to be in like a hermetically sealed bubble," says Griffiths. "It's always difficult for me to watch them because they never seem to exist in the real world. 'Six Feet Under' took the bubble away." During the show's five-season run, Griffiths earned a Golden Globe and two Best Supporting Emmy nominations.

Now she brings her star power to "Brothers & Sisters" as Sarah Walker, a career-driven woman who manages the family business while juggling the demands that come with being a wife and mother. Cast alongside Ally McBeal star Calista Flockhart and Emmy winner Sally Field, Griffiths was drawn to the idea of being part of an ensemble. "I was too tired to do a lead role," she says, "and I liked the idea of playing someone less complicated."

Like her character, Griffiths is a married mother of two who struggles to strike a balance between domestic duties and work commitments. In this interview, the no-nonsense star opens up on her character, her career and her plans to reveal the "dirty secret of American families."

What was it about this show's script that appealed to you?

I felt "Brothers & Sisters" was the first family

Rachel Griffiths emerges in the Emmy-winning 'Brothers & Sisters'

drama that really sat within its time and place. Its characters were affected by what happened in the world as much as the viewers, including everything from the price of gas to the nation being at war. I thought that was pretty new.

As a mother of two, was it easy to commit to another drama series?

I think Calista and I are very similar in the sense that we took this because we knew we would be part of an ensemble. Neither of us wanted to be the center of our own show.

Your character is a married mother who's also very focused on her career. Do you think most women can relate to her?

Definitely. Most women have to be good at their jobs, make a difference at work and then come home and be a good mom. It's a real responsibility to play this character with a kind of dignity and depth that reflects working women's struggle to balance life and family.



CLICK!

Sarah is quite a departure from Brenda, your character in "Six Feet Under." Was that intentional?

I wasn't conscious about what character to choose or avoid. But with this character in "Brothers & Sisters," I just got the feeling that I could express much more about who I am now. Brenda was a girl in her 20s. Sarah is like the first character for the rest of my life.

"Brothers & Sisters" airs on Star World Tuesdays at 10 p.m.

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Rumors and other show biz tumors

out my death are vastly exaggerated." For the stellar victims of fake "pregnancy" reports, however, the situation is quite as dull. Since they tend to be young and single, the rumors taint them with the stain of "loose" behavior and risky morals—even if the reports are posed as baseless concoctions of fetid minds.

Thus, rumors in show biz may be seen as casual humors by some, but their victims regard them as tumors at show. How some denizens of the entertainment world can so casually malign their chosen targets and cruelly damage their reputations for years.

The fact that most of these cynical liars go scot free makes the situation all the more galling, because they're free to brutalize other stars' public and private reputations.

These thoughts come to mind because we've learned that the rumormongers' latest victim is young multimedia star Karel Marquez, whose "date with the stork" has been trumpeted in some tabloid "reports," quite without basis.

Naturally, Karel has been thrown off and disturbed by the baseless rumor, but her mother, Pinky Marquez, and many colleagues and friends have rushed to her side to boost her spirits.

They point out that the rumormongers reserve their fetid-fabulations for big stars and promising comers, so the rumor about Karel is an indication that her star is on the rise.

Alas, that's small comfort for the young TV personality, who has chosen to focus instead on her busy work schedule, which includes her remaining scenes in "Zaido," her veejay duties, and her singing and hosting stints.

The big question is, why would anybody whip up such a wild and woolly tale about Karel?

What would his or her mo-

tive be? Veteran observers speculate that anger or envy could be the root cause here.

Anger? Perhaps. Karel recently miffed some people by not being able to do what they wanted in terms of being involved in a production that would have strained her work schedule to its limit.

Envy? These are some young starlets and their handlers who would just love to be in Karel's shoes in the biz, enough to take their frustration out on her in this sordid and cynical manner.

What, then, is Karel's defense? She and her mother Pinky have done the right thing by taking the rumored "scandal" to the media, instead of suffering in private. Now that it's out in the open, it's easy for the viewing public to see how hollow and baseless the rumor is.

But we continue to worry for other performers who may also become the innocent subjects of false reports in the coming months. Must they, too, pay the price for such blithe and cruel canards?

To lessen the power of the rumormongers to negatively influence public opinion and ruin careers, both media and the viewing public should be more discerning about which reports to give credence to, and which to reject out of hand.

If the "tumor rumors" aren't excised once and for all, their biggest victim would be the image of the local entertainment industry itself. With so many stars being unjustly maligned, the public could end up looking down on the industry as a whole, and refuse to support its continuing efforts to redeem itself. That would be the most insidious tumor of them all.

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MR WOODCOCK 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	HIGHLANDER: THE SOURCE 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	
RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION 12:50 / 3:10 / 5:30 / 7:50 / 9:50	STARDUST 12:35 / 3:30 / 6:25 / 9:20	THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

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THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING
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GLORIETTA 4	1 KNOCKED UP	2 MR. WOODCOCK	3 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING	
GREENBELT 1	1 STARDUST	2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING		
GREENBELT 3	1 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING	2 STARDUST		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 STARDUST	2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING	2 KNOCKED UP	3 STARDUST	4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
MARKET! MARKET!	1 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT	2 STARDUST		
TRINOMA	1 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT	2 HIGHLANDER / RESIDENT EVIL 3	3 STARDUST	4 MR. WOODCOCK
	5 THE 11TH HOUR	6 KNOCKED UP	7 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING	

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AS GREGORIA de Jesus in "Ang Lakambini at ang Supremo" (1975)



'No one appreciates culture here. TV networks—permit me to generalize—fill their shows with talents who have no talent.'



NATIONAL Artist Levi Celerio could finish a song in 10 minutes.



ARMIDA at age 3

Armida still a fighter



CLOWNING with Ric Manrique, Teroy de Guzman and Robert Natividad in 'Aawitan,' circa 1970s

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Roger Carpio
ADDITIONAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARMIDA SIGUION-REYNA

THE FEISTY ACTRESS-SINGER-PRODUCER Armida Siguion-Reyna admits, "I'm a fighter. I cannot stand idly by ... I fight even for small things."

She relates that, with her cell phone camera, she takes photos of buses that cut motorists and wander off their designated lanes. She also writes regularly to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, to report business establishments that fail to issue official receipts.

In short, she's in a perpetual state of righteous indignation and we can only pity those who incur her wrath.

The image that forms in the mind is that of a Spanish armada, in full battle regalia, barreling down turbulent seas.

To illustrate: On the day of the Glorietta blast, she pushed through with her monthly "Aawitan Kita" presentation at the Makati University—never mind the state of panic in the rest of the metropolis.

Clearly, she will never tire of crusading, especially for the cause of culture.

She bristles: "In this country, nobody appreciates culture. Permit me to generalize ... all these networks fill their shows with talents that have no talent."

In today's reality-obsessed and game-show-crazy landscape, an award-winning program like "Aawitan Kita," which showcases the best of Philippine music, would undoubtedly stand out like a sore thumb.



YOUNG singer makes debut on KZRH. "That was before I got married in 1951."



AT THE Makati University recently, with granddaughter Cris Villonco



AT HER high school graduation in New York

Armida, or Tita Midz as she is known in show biz circles, isn't so keen on staging a TV comeback. She is more than content mounting monthly *zarzuelas* sponsored by the Makati City government.

"It's mainly for the senior citizens. Although the show starts at 6 p.m., they line up as early as four. And when they hear a familiar melody, they clap and sing along."

Tita Midz lives for these precious moments.

She started "Aawitan Kita" 37 years ago on KBS 9.

"In its first two years, 'Aawitan' was station-produced," she recalls.

The program's first director was Freddie Cochran. In its first year, Freddie shot the show at the San Agustin Church and Fort Santiago in Intramuros.

"We were able to shoot there because Channel 9 had its own OB van," she recounts.

Freddie was "gifted," she concedes. "But we could never get along."

Soon enough, she asked Mitos Villareal to take over.

Mitos, who was then with ABS-CBN, made a counter-offer. "She told me that [ABS-CBN owner] Geny Lopez wanted me to transfer to his network."

Tita Midz was only too happy to make the switch. "Tapings in Channel 9 lasted from Saturday midnight to Sunday noon-time," she explains.

While the show was on ABS-CBN, martial law was declared in 1972.

"I asked permission from Geny if I could move to IBC 13," she relates. He gave her his blessing.

"But I stayed in Channel 13 for only 13 weeks. Run by Father Cornelius Lagerway, the studio was too small. Plus, the show was in black-and-white. Viewers couldn't appreciate our costumes and sets."

Since the only other network then was

KBS 9, Tita Midz had no choice but to return to her old stomping ground.

"KBS 9 later transferred to the ABS-CBN studio on Mother Ignacia, which was now abandoned. I rented nine rooms in the compound for P2,000 a month. I stored my production company's equipment there."

When KBS 9 transferred to Broadcast City, she moved along with the station.

Not content with mere studio productions, "Aawitan Kita" pioneered in musicals shot in scenic spots all over the country.

"The world first saw Villa Escudero on my show. There were only two cottages there at the time. We shot in Boracay when there was only one house on the island, owned by the Elizaldes."

Hers was also the only show that dared to shoot in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte, and Batanes.

"In the early 1980s, we brought Zsazsa Padilla to Batanes," she recalls. By then, she was producing the show herself.

Earlier, she bankrolled three historical-musical dramas, shot on 16mm film and aired on television in the martial-law era: Lino Brocka's "Dung-aw" or the story of Gabriela Silang in 1973; Arling Gonzales and Mitos Villareal's "Sisa" in 1974; and Lupita Aquino's "Ang Lakambini at ang Supremo" in 1975.

"I learned a lot about Philippine history through these projects," she quips.

In portraying revolutionary heroine Gabriela Silang, she had to master horseback riding, too.

"I fell off the horse nine times," she looks back. "Once in Tanay, I missed barbed wire by an inch. Everyone on the set panicked."

Except Tita Midz.



Freddie Cochran was the first director of 'Aawitan.'



RECEIVING Urian award from Christopher de Leon (for "Tahan na Empoy") in 1977

For these historical dramas, she commissioned Restie Umali to compose original music. "He did 65 songs for me," she says with unmistakable pride.

She also mounted modern *zarzuelas* on television: "Ang Binhi," "Sayang," "Ang Nazareno," "Ulo ng Lechon," among others.

"Ulo ng Lechon" was based on a short story by Amado V. Hernandez. How I loved that man," she says.

In "Ang Binhi," she also worked with Amado's wife and fellow National Artist, Atang de la Rama. "She played my mother and we had a beautiful duet, which we sang while setting the table," Tita Midz reminisces. As such, she truly can claim she has worked with almost everyone, from Atang to Zsazsa.

In "Sayang," she shared the screen with Boy Camara and Vic Silayan.

"The songs in those modern *zarzuelas* had Levi Celerio as lyricist," she says.

She relates working closely with the National Artist: "He'd arrive in my house at 9 a.m. and work the whole day. If he failed to finish, I'd ask him to stay overnight. He'd promise that he'd finish by dawn."

But when she wakes up in the morning ... "I'd find him sleeping," she says, hollering. "Amazingly, he could finish the lyrics in 10 minutes."

She explains that "Aawitan" has amassed 8,000 playback and 2,000 minus-one recordings.

Her life's work now involves cataloguing and archiving this extensive collection of Philippine music.

She taps this library whenever she stages the monthly musicals at the Makati University. She's been doing this for two years.

"It's hard work. You have to look for the right version from among several. For example, 'Saan Ka Man Naroroon' is the most recorded song in the show's history, with about 40 versions," she says.

Irresistible muse

To think that Tita Midz's music career was almost nipped in the bud.

When the 16-year-old Armida was asked by Fernando Poe Sr. of Palaris Films to audition as replacement for "juvenile singing sensation" Baby Jane, her father packed her bags and exiled her to Long Island, New York, so she could finish her studies.

But music proved to be an irresistible muse.

Almost four decades later, "Aawitan" remains to be her most enduring passion, allowing her to bridge even political divides.

Although she's a staunch supporter of former President Joseph "Erap" Estrada, she has remained cordial with his nemesis, Luis "Chavit" Singson.

"Whenever we had shoots in Ilocos, Chavit would ask me to pass by his house. He would serve a hefty breakfast for the entire cast and crew before our trip back to Manila," she says.

When the Sandiganbayan verdict was handed down, she wept buckets on national television for her friend Erap. It was the first time she ever showed a vulnerable side.

"Funny thing was, a radio show's representative later called and asked if I could cry again on air." She was stunned, but not speechless.

"I told the caller that I wasn't a sideshow. It was so hilarious, I forgot about my depression."

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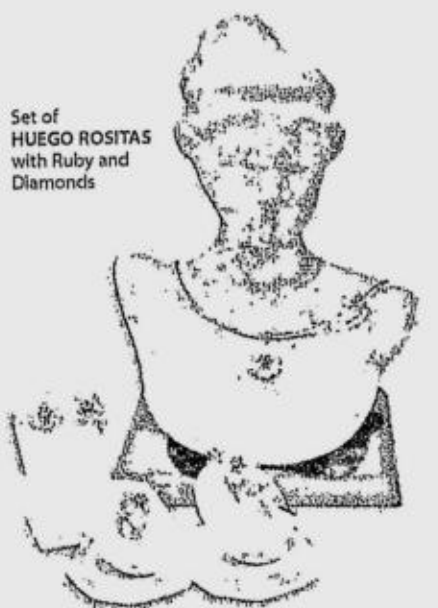
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2	THE SEEKER 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 GP
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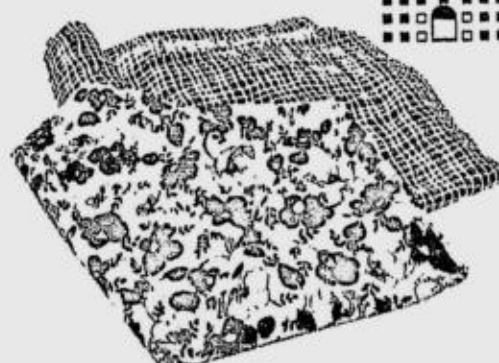
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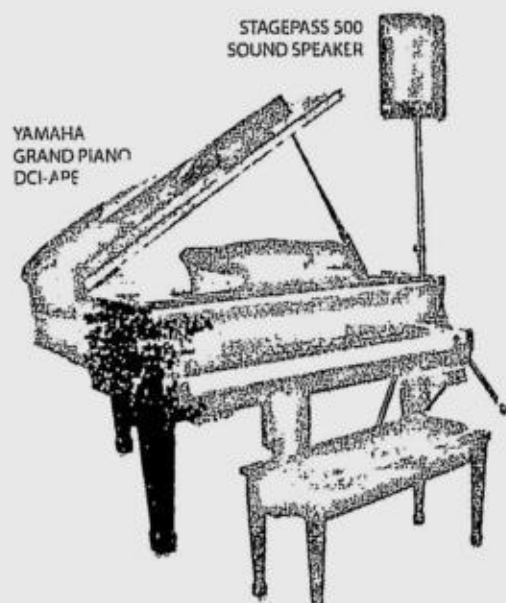
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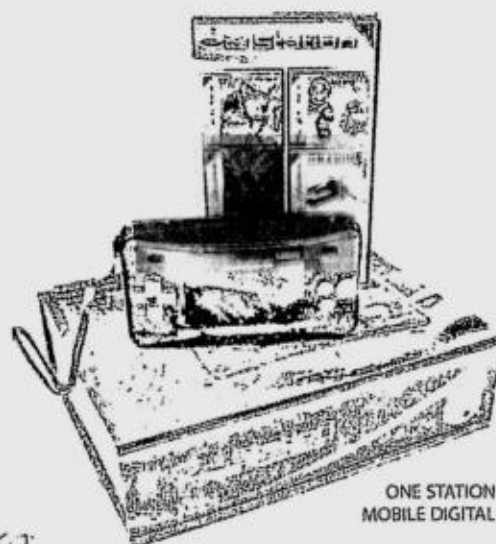
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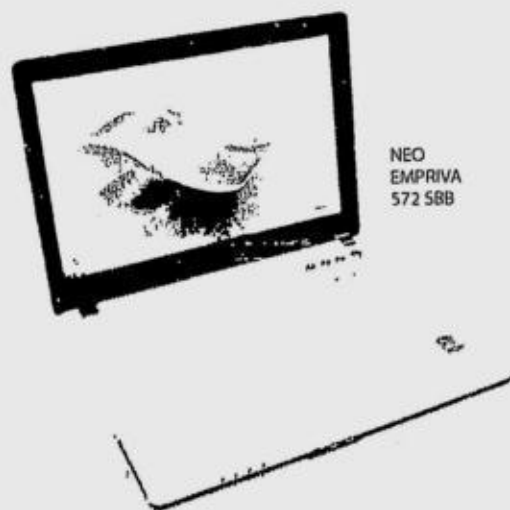


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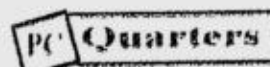
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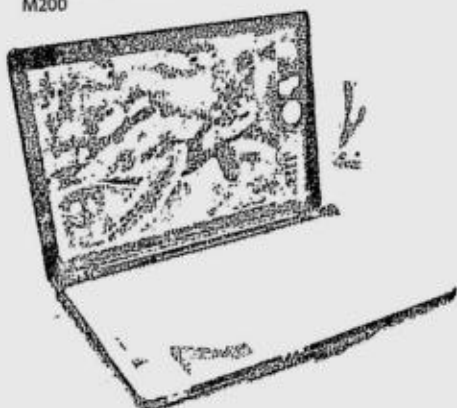
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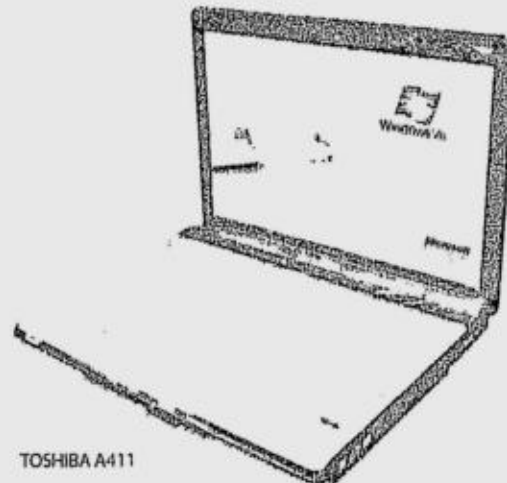


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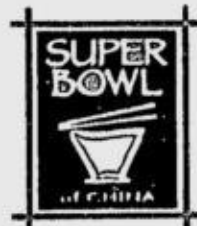


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